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CORINNA,

OR

ITALY.

BY

MAD. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN.

. . . . . Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apeanin parte, e 'l mar circonda; e l' Alpe.

PETRARCH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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1807.

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CORINNA.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

STATUES AND THE PAINTINGS.

AFTER this day's adventure, Oswald could not shut his eyes during the whole night. He had never been so near sacrificing every thing to Corinna. He would not even demand her secret, or at least, before knowing it, he wished solemnly to pledge his faith that he would consecrate to her the remainder of his life. Doubt seemed now wholly banished from his mind; and he amused himself with thinking of the letter he intended to write to

her on the following morning, and on which hung the ultimate desision of his fate. But how weak was his resolution, how evanescent his hopes of happiness! Too soon his thoughts recurred to the past events of his life. He had already loved, though never to such a degree as he now loved Corinna; nor could the first object of his choice be compared to her; still that passion had led him astray —led him to commit actions that reflection disapproved, and which had cruelly lacerated the heart of his father.—"Ah! who knows," said he, "who knows whether his son may not to-day equally forget his duty to his country?"—"Oh, thou!" said he, addressing himself to his father's portrait, "thou who wast ever my best friend, no longer shall I hear thy voice; but let that silent look, whose power is so absolute over my soul, teach me to act so as not to disturb thy celestial happiness. Forget not, however, the misery attendant on mortality, and be as

indulgent to your son in thy celestial abode as thou wast wont to be when an inhabitant of the earth. I shall become a better man by having such an angelic woman for my companion, and by having the example of her virtues continually before my eyes; if I can protect and save such a woman—Save her? he suddenly ejaculated; and from what? from a life of pleasure, wealth, and independence!" This reflection made him shudder as an inspiration from his father.

In sentimental struggles, who has not often experienced a kind of secret superstition which is mistaken as a warning from Heaven of approaching sufferings? Such struggles between passion and conscience are not uncommon in susceptible minds!

Oswald traversed his chamber in a state of extreme agitation, sometimes stopping to gaze on the mild and refulgent beams

of an Italian moon. The contemplation of nature taught him resignation, but could not remove his inquietude. The dawn of morning found him in the same state of agitation; and when Count d'Erfeuil and M. Edgermond entered his apartment, they anxiously inquired if he was unwell, so much was he altered by the mental conflicts he had undergone during the night. The Count was the first to break silence. "It must be confessed," said he, "that the entertainment of yesterday was delightful. Corinna is a fascinating creature. I did not hear above half of what she uttered, but I guessed it all by her looks and tone of voice. Pity that such talents should have fallen to the lot of so wealthy a female! If she had been poor, and her own mistress, she might have become an actress, and would then have been the pride and glory of the Italian stage."

This discourse gave a pang to the heart

of Oswald, but which he endeavoured to suppress, as Count d'Erfeuil had the peculiar art of saying what he chose without giving offence, even when his remarks left a disagreeable impression on the mind. Sensible minds only know how to act without hurting the feelings of others; self-love, so susceptible itself, never regards the susceptibility of others.

M. Edgermond praised Corinna in the most delicate and flattering terms. Oswald replied to him in English, in order to avoid in the conversation respecting Corinna the disagreeable encomiums of Count d'Erfeuil. "It appears to me that I am an intruder," said the Count, "I shall go to Corinna's, she will be glad to hear my observations on her performance of yesterday. I have some advice to give her which will lead me into details; but they are often necessary, and she is such a wonderful woman, that nothing must be neglected to make her acquire perfection.

"And then," said he, whispering Lord Nevil, "I wish to encourage her to act often in tragedy; it will be a sure way for her to become the wife of some foreign traveller of distinction. As for you and me, my dear Oswald, we will never be guilty of such folly; we are too much accustomed to the company of beautiful and accomplished women to commit such a foolish action: but who knows but that some German prince, or Spanish grandee" —At these words Oswald arose, being no longer able to contain himself, and who knows what might have been the consequence, had Count d'Erfeuil perceived his emotion; but so satisfied was he with his last remark, that he turned upon his heel in order to retire, not suspecting that he had offended Lord Nelvil; had he known it, much as he loved him, he would have remained. The great courage of Count d'Erfeuil served even more than his vanity to blind him to his faults As he was tenacious in every point of honour, he did

not believe himself deficient in sensibility; and believing himself, as he really was, brave and amiable, he was perfectly satisfied with his situation, and wished for no higher rank in life.

Oswald's agitation had not escaped the penetrating eyes of M. Edgermond, and when Count d'Erfeuil had retired, he said to him, "My dear Oswald, I am going to leave you, I shall go to Naples." "Why so soon?" replied Lord Nelvil, "because this is no longer a place for me," continued M. Edgermond. "I am fifty years of age, and nevertheless am not certain but I might become the dupe of Corinna." —"And if you should," interrupted Oswald, "what would then happen?"— "Such a woman was not formed to live in Wales," replied M. Edgermond; "believe me, my dear Oswald, none but *Englishwomen can suit Englishmen.* It is not for me to advise you, and I have no occasion to assure you, that I will be silent re-

specting what I have seen; but, all amiable as is Corinna, I am of Walpole's opinion, *what would it avail us at home?* and with us *home* is every thing, at least for the women. Represent to yourself your beautiful Italian left alone when you are at the chace, or attending your duty in parliament, and retiring with the desert, in order to prepare tea when you rise from table. Dear Oswald, our females possess domestic virtues, which you will look for in vain in other countries. In Italy the men have nothing else to do but to please the fair sex—thus the more lovely a woman is, the more homage she receives. But with us, where the men are in general engaged in active pursuits, the women must remain in the back ground, a very unfit place for such a woman as Corinna; her I could wish to place upon a throne, but not beneath my humble roof. My Lord, I was well acquainted with your wo hy mother, who was so deeply regretted by your venerable father; she

much resembled my young cousin, and such a one would I wish for a wife, were I still young enough to make a choice, and could hope for a reciprocal return. Adieu, my dear friend, do not be offended at what I have just now said; no person can admire Corinna more than I do; and perhaps were I at your time of life, I should not be able to renounce the hope of rendering myself agreeable to her."

On finishing these words he took the hand of Lord Nelvil, which he affectionately pressed, and retired without Oswald being able to utter a single word. But Edgermond understood the cause of his silence, and satisfied with Oswald's returning the pressure of his hand, he went away, being himself impatient to put an end to a conversation which cost him so much.

Of all that Edgermond had uttered, one word alone had struck the heart of Os-

wald; his *mother*—well did he remember his father's attachment to her, though he was but fourteen when she died; with sentiments of profound love and veneration he recalled to remembrance the mild and estimable virtues of her character.—"Fool! idiot that I am," cried he, "when alone, not to know what kind of woman my father would destine for me. Can I have forgotten my mother? forgotten her he so tenderly loved? What can I wish for more? Why do I deceive myself, in pretending ignorance of what he would think, could I now ask his advice."

How terrible was the idea of returning to Corinna after what had passed on the preceding evening, without saying something which might confirm the sentiments he had already expressed. The agitation of his mind became so great, as to cause the wound in his breast to bleed afresh. His terrified attendants ran on all sides, calling loudly for help, while he secretly

wished for death to put an end to his anguish. Could I but once more see Corinna! could I but once more hear her call me *her* Romeo! gladly would I resign life. And the tears trickled down his cheeks; they were the first he had shed since the death of his father.

He wrote to Corinna to inform her of the accident by which he was confined, and concluded this epistle with a few melancholy expressions. How different were the thoughts that had ushered in the morning to Corinna! How exquisite the idea of having made an impression on the heart of Oswald, and feeling herself beloved! She felt happy, although she knew not exactly what she wished for.—A thousand circumstances made her look with dread at the prospect of an union with Lord Nelvil; but her passions being stronger than her prudence, and guided merely by the present without any regard to future, that day which cost her so much

pain had dawned upon her as the most bright and happy of her whole life!

On reading Oswald's note she experienced the bitter pangs of the most severe anguish. She thought him in greater danger than he was in reality, and she immediately set off on foot, crossed the *Corso* at the time it was most frequented, and entered Oswald's house in sight of the most fashionable society of Rome. She had not allowed herself time for reflection, and her speed had been so great, that when she came into Oswald's chamber she was unable to breathe or utter a single syllable. Lord Nelvil felt all she hazarded on his account, and exaggerating to himself the consequences of a step that would have dishonoured a woman's fame in England, especially an unmarried one, transported with sentiments of generosity, love, and gratitude; feeble as he was he pressed Corinna to his heart, and exclaimed: "Oh, my beloved! never will I for-

sake thee, who hast not hesitated thus to expose thyself for my sake! and I ought to make thee amends for—" Corinna understood his meaning, and immediately interrupting him, she disentangled herself gently from his arms, and said to him, after having inquired how he found himself—"You mistake, my Lord; in paying you this visit, I do nothing more than what most of the women in Rome would have done in my place; I am informed of your being in a state of danger; you are a stranger here; I am the only acquaintance you have formed; ought I not to take care of you? Established forms are to be respected when self only is to be sacrificed to them: but surely they ought to yield to the apprehensions and anxiety for a friend in danger? Cruel would be the fate of a female if these same forms, in suffering one to love, forbade only the irresistible impulse that makes one fly to the assistance of the beloved object. My Lord, fear not my having

exposed myself by coming here: my age and talents have given me here the privilege of a married woman. My friends know that I have been here. Whether they blame me or not for loving you I know not, but surely they will not find fault with my devoting myself to the man I love." When Oswald heard these expressions uttered in so natural and sincere a manner, he felt a confused mixture of different impressions. Sensible of the delicacy of Corinna's answer, he was sorry to see himself undeceived in what he had first supposed; he could have wished she had for him been guilty of an unpardonable error in the public opinion, in order that this very fault might impose on him the obligation of making her his wife, and put an end to his doubts and fears. He did not relish this freedom of the Italian morals which thus prolonged his anxiety, which left him a great degree of happiness without any tie. He wished that honour might command what he desired.

His agitated spirits caused the wound to bleed afresh. Corinna, though dreadfully alarmed, was all kindness; her assiduous attentions were full of a charming sweetness.

Towards the evening Oswald felt himself more oppressed: Corinna on her knees near his bed, supported his head on her arm, though she was at that moment much more agitated than he was. Notwithstanding his sufferings, he often cast on Corinna a look expressive of the most heartfelt delight. "Corinna," said he in a low voice, "read to me in that paper, containing my father's reflections concerning death. Think not, my beloved," said he, on seeing her emotion, "that I think I am threatened with its approach. But whenever I feel myself unwell I love to peruse these words of consolation, which I fancy I hear him utter. Besides, I wish, my Corinna, you should know what kind of man my father was: you

will be the better able to judge of my grief for his loss, and of the empire he had over me, and of all I have one day to impart." Corinna took the paper which Oswald always kept near him, and with a trembling voice she read a few pages to him.

"Ye faithful and beloved servants of "the Lord, you will talk of death without "fear; for it will be for you but a change "of habitation: and the one you will "leave is perhaps the least of all. O innumerable worlds, that fill the space infinite to our view! ye globes, the work "of the Almighty, teeming with his creatures unknown to us: ye that perform "your appointed course in the vast expanse! let our praises unite with yours: "we know nothing of your state, nothing of your first, second, or last "share in the mercies of the Supreme "Being; but in conversing on life and "death, on time past, and on futurity,

" we connect our interest with those of
" all intelligent and sensible creatures, no
" matter how distant the place, how
" vast the separation between us. Ye fa-
" milies of different nations and tribes, in-
" habitants of spheres unknown, and as
" yet unseen, sing with us. Glory to
" the Ruler of Heaven, to Nature's King,
" to the God of the Universe; glory and
" homage be to him who can as he pleases
" transmute sterility into abundance, sha-
" dow into reality, and death itself into
" eternal life.

" Doubtless the death of the just man
" is a desirable end; but few among us,
" few of our forefathers have been blest
" with such a sight. Where is that man
" who would appear without dread before
" the face of the Almighty?—Where is
" the man who has always loved God,
" who has served him from his youth, and
" who at an advanced age fears no alarm-
" ing recollection?—Where is that man

" who has never deviated from the path
" of rectitude without any consideration
" for the praise and reward of opinions ?
" Where is, ah, where is that being fit to
" be a model for us all ! If he exist among
" us, let us surround him with reverence,
" and intreat of him to suffer us to witness
" his last moments with the same eager-
" ness we should the most splendid spec-
" tacle ; we shall need resolution to
" stand round the bed of terror, to give
" all our attention.—Behold ! there he
" lies never to rise again. He foresees the
" moment is approaching ; see how serene
" his countenance ! his forehead seems
" adorned with the crown of glory : and
" he says with the apostle: I know in
" whom I have put my trust, and this con-
" fidence animates his looks even when
" his strength fails him ; he already takes
" a survey of the new country he is going
" to be an inhabitant of, but without for-
" getting the one he is about to leave ; he
" flies to his Creator, to his God, but does

" not abjure the sentiments that have
" made the delight of his closing life.

" Of all those who are nearly related to
" him his faithful mate is the first, who,
" according to the laws of nature, is des-
" tined to follow after him; her he tries
" to console, wipes away her tears, tells
" her they shall meet again in mansions of
" never-ending bliss: he cannot separate
" this idea. He recals to her mind the
" happy days they have spent together;
" not that he seeks to wound the feelings
" of the friend of his bosom, but to in-
" crease their mutual confidence in celes-
" tial goodness. He reminds the com-
" panion and sharer of his fortune how
" tenderly he has loved her, not to cause
" regrets he would rather soothe, but to
" enjoy a little longer the pleasing recol-
" lection, that their fond hearts were like
" two tender twigs grafted on one trunk,
" which, entwining together, will be a
" prop and stay on that uncertain and ob-

" scure bourne, where they will find their
" surest refuge in the mercies of their
" God. But, alas! is it possible to form
" a just idea of the emotions of a loving
" heart at the moment when a vast soli-
" tude opens to the view, when the senti-
" ments and concerns that have subsisted
" during our happiest days, are vanishing
" away from our sight. Oh! ye who are
" destined to survive this half of yourself,
" decreed by heaven to be your support
" in this life, and the object of your fondest
" affections, whose closing eyes now bid
" you an adieu, could you refuse to lay
" your hand on a sinking heart, whose last
" thrill still addresses you, when the lips
" have ceased to move, and all other lan-
" guage fails? And shall we, your faith-
" ful friends, shall we, could we blame you
" if you had desired that your remains
" might be entombed together, and your
" ashes suffered to intermingle with each
" other. God of all power and goodness
" grant that they may both rise again

" together ; or if one only has deserved
" thy favour, if one only be called among
" the small number of thy chosen servants,
" suffer the other to perceive the light of
" angels, at the moment when the last
" trumpet shall summon the blessed to
" meet together, suffer him to take ano-
" ther sip of bliss before he falls again into
" eternal darkness.

" Oh ! we deceive ourselves when we at-
" tempt to describe the last moments of the
" man of feeling, who beholds death advanc-
" ing with rapid strides, ready to separate
" him from all the objects of his affection.
" He collects all his strength, summons
" up the man within him, that his dying
" words may convey a useful lesson to his
" children. He addresses them thus : Be
" not terrified at the approaching disso-
" lution of your father, your old friend.
" Condemned by nature's law to quit this
" earth as he came before you, he will set
" you a pattern of courage ; yet he leaves

" you with regret. Doubtless, he wished
" to assist you a little longer with his ex-
" perience, and accompany you a little
" further, to guide you through the perils
" and intricacies of youth. *But life has*
" *no support when the grave yawns to re-*
" *ceive us;* you must now proceed on
" alone through a land which I must
" quit. May you lay up a rich store of
" those blessings which Providence has
" amply diffused; but never forget that
" this world itself is a fleeting world, and
" that you are destined for another far
" more durable. Perhaps we shall meet
" again: my prayers and my tears shall be
" the last sacrifice I offer up for you be-
" fore the throne of grace. Love religion
" that holds out such fair promises—love
" religion, the last bond of union between
" parents and children. Come near me,
" that my eyes may behold you once more
" ere they close for ever—let the blessings
" of God's faithful servant be upon you—
" he dies—angels and ministers of grace

" receive his soul, and leave us here below " the remembrance of his deeds, of his " thoughts, and of his hopes."

This lecture was often interrupted by the reciprocal emotion of Oswald and Corinna. At last they were forced to give it up. Corinna dreaded lest Oswald's tears should increase his disorder; they had fallen in such torrents she was shocked at the condition he was in, and did not perceive that she was not much better herself. Oswald stretched out his hand to her, and said: " Friend of my heart, thy tears have mingled with mine: thou hast bewailed with me the loss of my tutelary, still my guardian angel—methinks I feel his last embrace, and behold his last looks. Perhaps you were destined by him to console me for his loss. Perhaps—" " Ah, no," cried Corinna, " he has not thought me worthy of such a distinction."—" What say you?" exclaimed Oswald; " Corinna was afraid she had

uttered what she wished to conceal, and repeated what had just escaped her lips: saying only, " he would not think me worthy of it." The alteration of this word chased away the uneasiness that it at first occasioned in Oswald's heart, and he continued to discourse with more composure about his father.

The physicians arrived, and in some degree reanimated her hopes; but they absolutely prohibited Lord Nelvil from speaking until the vessel which was opened was cicatrized. In this manner passed six whole days, during which time Corinna never left the side of Oswald, and prevented him from uttering a single word, by gently imposing silence when he attempted to speak. She had the art of filling up the time by reading, music, and conversation; sometimes of a serious, at others of a gay nature; always imparting to her subject a grace and novelty by her manner of treating it.

All these graces and accomplishments served to veil the internal anguish she experienced, and which she wished to conceal from Lord Nelvil; but she was never a single moment diverted from it. She perceived almost before Oswald himself what he suffered; the courage by which he endeavoured to conceal it, never for a moment deceived Corinna; she anticipated all his wants, and hastened to alleviate his sufferings, endeavouring as much as possible to make light of the attentions she paid him. Nevertheless, when Oswald became pale, the colour also fled from the lips of Corinna, and her hands trembled when giving him assistance; but she strove to recover herself, and smiled through her tears. Sometimes she pressed the hand of Oswald to her heart, as if to infuse new life into him. At length her cares succeeded—Oswald recovered.

"Corinna," said he to her, when she at last allowed him to speak, "why was not

my friend Edgermond here to be a witness of the days you have passed with me. He would have seen that you are not less amiable than beautiful, he would have seen that domestic life with you is a scene of constant bliss, and that you only differ from other women by having joined to all their virtues the addition of all their charms. No, it is too much, I must put an end to this combat which lacerates my heart, this combat which has brought me to the brink of the grave. Corinna, thou shalt listen to me, thou shalt hear all my secrets, although thou concealest thine, and thou shalt pronounce our fate."—"Our fate!" replied Corinna, "if you feel as I do, it is never to leave each other. But believe me when I tell you, that at present at least I dare not even entertain the idea of becoming your wife. What I experience is perfectly new to me; my ideas upon life, my projects concerning the future are entirely subverted by this passion which so much perplexes, and every

day acquires more power over me. But I know not whether we can, whether we ought to become united."—" Corinna," replied Oswald, " do you not despise me for having hesitated? do you attribute it to petty considerations? Can you not have imagined that the deep and terrible remorse which has for two years unceasingly pursued and lacerated my heart, is not of itself sufficient to cause my irresolution?" " I understand you," replied Corinna. " If I had suspected you of a motive foreign to the affections of the heart, you will not be him that I love. Habits, remembrances, and circumstances, create around us a tie which even passion itself cannot wholly destroy. It may be dissevered for a moment, but it will return and cling about the heart as the ivy around the oak. My dear Oswald, do not give to each epocha of our existence more than that epocha requires. What is necessary to me at present is only that you do not forsake me. The terror of your departure

would, like a punishment, unceasingly pursue me. You are a stranger in this country, you are bound to it by no tie. If you should leave it all would be over, and my grief for your loss would alone remain. Nature, these fine arts, that poetry, all that I feel with you, and now, alas! only with you, every thing would be a void in my soul. I awake trembling; I know not, when I behold this beautiful day, if I am not deceived by the resplendence of its rays, if you are still here, you, the sun of my life.—Oswald, take from me this terror, and I will not look beyond the delightful security of the present moment."—"You know," replied Oswald, "that an Englishman never renounces his country, that war may recal me, that—" "Ah! God," cried Corinna, "for what do you wish to prepare me?" and all her limbs trembled as if at the approach of the most frightful danger.

"Well, if it be thus, take me with you

as your wife, as your slave." But suddenly recovering herself, she said: "Oswald, will you never depart without first warning me? In no country is a criminal ever conducted to punishment without having some hours given him to collect his thoughts. It must not be by means of a letter, it must be yourself who shall inform me; you must listen to me before your departure, and I shall then be able perhaps—What! you hesitate to grant me my request," said Corinna.—"No," answered Oswald, "I do not hesitate, since you wish it. Well, I swear, if this departure is necessary, I will inform you of it, and that moment will decide our future life."—"Yes," said Corinna, "it will decide it."—Saying which she retired.

CHAPTER II.

DURING the days which succeeded the sickness of Oswald, Corinna carefully avoided every thing that might tend to an explanation between them. She wished to render the life of her lover as agreeable as possible, but she did not wish yet to entrust him with her history. All she had remarked in their conversations had but too well convinced her of the impression he had received on learning what she was, and what she had sacrificed; and nothing gave her more uneasiness than that this impression might alienate his affections from her.

Returning then to the amiable address of which she had made use, in order to prevent Oswald from delivering himself up

to his impassionate inquietudes, she wished to interest his mind and imagination by the wonders of the fine arts he had never seen, and thus for a short time retard the moment which was to enlighten and decide her fate. Such a situation would have been insupportable in all other feelings but love; but it bestows upon us such blissful hours; it sheds such a charm over every moment, that much as it stands in need of an indefinite future, it becomes intoxicated with the present, and thinks each day an age of happiness or misery, so much is this day filled by a multitude of emotions and ideas! Ah! doubtless it is by love alone that eternity can be comprised; it confounds all notions of time; it effaces the idea of a beginning and an end; it thinks it will for ever possess the beloved object, so difficult is it to conceive an ability to live without that object. The more terrible separation is, the less likely it appears to take place; it becomes like death, a fear of which we

speak more than we believe, a future which seems impossible, though at the same time it is known to be inevitable.

Corinna, among her innocent stratagems to vary the amusements of Oswald, had still reserved the statues and paintings; and one day, after Lord Nelvil's health was quite re-established, she proposed to him that they should visit together every place which Rome afforded worthy of notice in sculpture and painting. "It is a shame," said she sportively, "to be unacquainted with our statues and paintings, and to-morrow we shall commence our tour through all the museums and galleries." "It is your wish," replied Lord Nelvil, "therefore I consent to it. But indeed, Corinna, you have no occasion to have recourse to foreign resourses to fix me near you; it is, on the contrary, a sacrifice I make when I turn my regards from you upon any object whatever."

They first went to the museum of the Vatican, this palace of statues, where the human figure is seen deified by paganism, as the sentiments of the soul are now by Christianity. Corinna remarked to Lord Nelvil these silent saloons where are assembled together the images of gods and of heroes, where the most perfect beauty seems to enjoy itself in an eternal repose. In contemplating these exquisite features and forms, it reveals, I know not what design of divinity upon man, expressed by the noble figure with which it has gifted them. This contemplation elevates the soul to most enthusiastic and virtuous hopes; for beauty is contained in the universe, and, under whatever form it presents itself, it always excites a religious emotion in the mind of man. What poetry surpasses those countenances where the most sublime expression is for ever fixed, and where the greatest thoughts are clothed with so worthy an expression!

Sometimes an ancient sculptor only executed one statue in his life time: it was his entire history. He brought it every day to greater perfection. If he himself loved, or was the object of that passion: if he received from nature, or from the fine arts, any new impression, he embellished the features of his hero both from his recollections and his sentiments. He knew in this manner how to bring to view all the feelings of his soul. In modern times, in the midst of a state of society so cold and oppressive, the expression of pain is what is most noble in a man, and in our days the person who has not suffered, has neither felt nor thought. But there was in ancient times something more noble than the expression of pain, it was that of an heroic calm, and that consciousness of force which might be developed under free and generous institutions. The first statues of the Greeks express only repose. The Laocoon and Niobe are the only ones which

express violent pain, but it is the vengeance of Heaven that they represent, and not the innate passions of the human heart. The moral being was among the ancients so well recognized, the air circulated so freely in their expanded breasts, the political order was in such harmony with their faculties, that there hardly ever existed, as in our times, minds ill at ease. This state of society necessarily developed many delicate ideas, but does not furnish to the arts, and particularly to sculpture, those simple affections which are the primitive elements of those sentiments which can only be expressed by everlasting marble.

One scarce finds any traces of the melancholy in their statues. A head of Apollo in the palace Justiniani, another of Alexander dying, are the only ones in which the dispositions of a mind engaged in *reverie,* or suffering affliction, are pointed out. But they both belong, according to appearances, to those times when Greece

was enslaved. From that period there no longer existed that pride or tranquillity of soul which have produced among the ancients the *chef-d'œuvre* of sculpture and of poetry composed in the same spirit.

When thought has no longer any thing to feed on from without, it retires within itself; it analyzes, it labours, and profoundly meditates on the internal feelings, but it has no longer that creative power which supports happiness, and that fulness of strength which happiness alone can give. The very tombs of the ancients only recalled warlike or lively ideas to the mind. In the great number of them collected in the museum of the Vatican, one sees only battles and games executed in bas-relief. The memory of the activity of life was the best homage they could pay the dead. Nothing was calculated to weaken or diminish their force. Encouragement and emulation were the principles of the fine arts, as well as of po-

litics. There was room for every virtue and for every talent. The common people were proud of knowing how to admire, and those who could not aspire to the crowns of genius still did homage to it.

The religion of the Greeks was not, like the christian religion, the comfort of misfortune, the luxury of misery, or the future life to the dying. Its aim was glory and triumph, and it exalted man almost to divine honours. In this worship, which has proved so perishable, even beauty was connected with religious opinions, and if artists were called upon to paint base or savage passions, they spared human nature of the shame of them, by adding something of the brute to the figure, as in the case of fawns and centaurs; and to give to beauty the most sublime character, they alternately united in the statues of men and women the charms of both sexes (as in the warlike Minerva, or in Apollo

leading the Muses) where strength and softness are blended together. It is a happy mixture of those two opposite qualities, without which neither of them would be perfect.

Corinna, in continuing her observations, kept Oswald some time before the statues which are represented as sleeping before the tombs, and which shew the art of sculpture in the most agreeable point of view. She made him remark, that those statues which are supposed to represent some curve in the motion which is suspended, produces a sort of astonishment that is sometimes painful; but those that are either supposed to be sleeping, or to express complete repose, present an image of eternal tranquillity, which is wonderfully like the effect that a southern climate produces on man. It appears that the fine arts are the peaceable spectators of nature, and that even that genius which agitates the soul in a northern climate,

would, under a more favourable sky, only give an additional harmony.

Oswald and Corinna then past into the hall where the sculptured forms of animals and reptiles are assembled, and the statue of Tiberius was found to be placed among them by accident. It was without any intention that such a disposition of them was made. These marble figures appeared spontaneously to range themselves about their master. Another hall contained the melancholy and gloomy monuments of the Egyptians; of that nation whose statues were more like mummies than men, and which by its institutions of silence, stiffness, and servility, appeared, as far as possible, to have made life resemble death. The Egyptians excelled much more in the art of imitating animals than men. It was the empire of the soul which appeared to be inaccessible to them.

The porticoes of the Museum next ap-

pear, where at each step one sees a new *chef-d'œuvre.* Vases, altars, and ornaments of every kind, surround the Apollo, the Laocoon, and the Muses. It is there that one learns to relish Homer and Sophocles. It is there that the mind receives a knowledge of antiquity which cannot be acquired elsewhere. It is in vain that we trust to the reading of history to comprehend the genius of the different nations. What is seen excites in us many more ideas than what is read, and external objects cause a strong emotion, which gives to the study of the past the same interest and life that is found in the observation of men who live, and actions which are done in our own time.

In the midst of those magnificent porticoes, the repositories of so many wonders, there are perennial fountains, which softly remind us of the hours that were past in the same tranquillity two thousand years ago, when the artists who executed

those *chef-d'œuvres* were in being. The most melancholy impression, however, which is experienced at the museum of the Vatican, is in contemplating the broken parts of the statues which are there collected: the mutilated trunk of Hercules, heads separated from the bodies, and a foot of Jupiter, which supposes a statue greater and more perfect than any thing we know. One thinks one sees the field of battle when Time has fought against Genius, and those mutilated limbs attest its victory and our losses.

After having left the Vatican, Corinna conducted Oswald to the colossal figures of Monti-Cavallo. Those two figures are said to represent Castor and Pollux; each of the two heroes manages with one hand a fiery stud that prances and curvetts. Those colossal forms, that struggle of man with the animals give, as all the works of the ancients do, an admirable idea of the physical powers of human na-

ture. This power, however, has something noble in it which is no longer to be found in the present state of society, where bodily exercises are usually given up to the common people. It is not the animal force of human nature which is principally to be remarked in *chef-d'œuvres*. It appears that among the ancients, who lived almost incessantly in the midst of war, where they fought man to man, there was a more intimate union between the physical and moral faculties than at present. Bodily strength and generosity of soul, the dignity of features, and the pride of character, heighth of stature, and commanding authority, were inseparable ideas, before a religion entirely intellectual had placed the power of man in his soul. The human form, which was the same as that of their gods, appeared symbolical; and the muscular colossal figure of Hercules, with all the figures of that class in antiquity, do not retrace the vulgar ideas of common life, but that all

powerful and divine free will, which shews itself under the emblem of a supernatural physical strength.

Corinna and Lord Nelvil finished their day by going to see the workshop of Canova, the greatest modern sculptor. As it was late they were obliged to see it by torch light, and the statues were seen in this manner to much greater advantage. The ancients were of the same opinion, as they always placed them in their baths, where day-light never entered. By torch-light a marked shade takes off the dazzling uniformity of the marble, and the statues appear to have a pale colour, which is more expressively characteristic both of grace and life. Canova had a most admirable statue destined for a tomb: it represented Grief supported by a lion, the emblem of Fame. Corinna, in looking at the figure of Grief, thought she perceived some resemblance to Oswald, and the artist himself was struck with it. Lord Nel-

vil turned aside, in order to avoid any attentive observation, but said in a low voice to his female friend: "Corinna, I was condemned to this eternal grief when I met with you, but you have changed the course of my life, and sometimes hope, and always a trouble mixed with charms possesses this heart, which for the future should only know regret."

CHAPTER III.

THE *chefs-d'œuvres* of painting were then assembled at Rome, and its riches in that respect exceeded that of the rest of the world. Does the nature of the subjects, which the great artists of Italy have chosen, admit that variety and originality of character which painting is able to express? Oswald and Corinna differed in their opinions upon this subject; but this difference, like all other differences between them, depended on the difference of nations, climates, and religions. Corinna affirmed, that religious subjects were the most favourable to painting. She said that sculpture was the art of paganism, but that painting belonged to christianity, and that in those arts, as well as in poetry, would be found the qualities which dis-

tinguish ancient and modern literature. The works of Michael Angelo, the painter from the bible, and of Raphael, the painter of the gospel, suppose as much depth of thought or sensibility as are to be found in Shakspeare or Racine. Sculpture could only present to the view a simple and energetic state of existence, whereas painting discloses all the secret workings of a mind collected and resigned, and makes the immortal soul speak through the medium of transient colours. Corinna also maintained that historical facts, or actions taken from poems, were seldom picturesque. It was often necessary, in order to understand such pictures, to retain the custom of the ancient painters, and write upon a label from their mouths the words that the personages were supposed to be saying. Whereas religious subjects are immediately understood by every body, and the attention is not turned from the art to guess at what it represents.

Corinna thought that the expression of modern painters, in general, was somewhat theatrical; that it had the stamp of their age, and that they did not know, like Andrew Mantegne, Perugin, and Leonard de Vinci, that unity of existence, and that natural manner which belongs to the ancient expression of repose. To this repose, however, is now joined that depth of feeling which characterises christianity. She admired the simplicity of Raphael's pictures, particularly those in his first manner of painting. All the figures are naturally directed to one principal object, without the artist thinking of grouping them in attitudes, or labouring at the effect which they were to produce. Corinna said, that this sincerity in the works of imagination, as in every thing else, is the real character of genius, and that a calculation of effect is generally destructive to enthusiasm. She maintained that there was an eloquence in painting as well as in poetry, and that it was those

who did not know how to mark the characters who sought for adventitious ornaments, uniting all the effect of a fine subject with rich dresses and remarkable attitudes; while the simple figures of the Virgin, holding her child in her arms, an old man attentive at the mass; a man leaning on his stick in the 'School of Athens,' or St. Cecilia raising her eyes to heaven, produced by the expression of the look and the countenance much deeper impressions. These natural beauties are every day seen with increased effect; whereas in the pictures formed to produce an effect, the first view is always the most striking.

Corinna added to those reflexions an observation which gave them greater strength. It was, that the religious sentiments of the Greeks and Romans, and the whole disposition of their minds being different from ours, it was impossible for us to create in their style, or to in-

vent upon their ground. One may imitate them by force of study, but how can genius find its scope when memory and learning are so necessary? The case is different with respect to subjects belonging to our own history, or our own religion. With respect to them, painters may have a personal inspiration: they feel what they paint, they paint what they have seen. From life they can imagine life, but when they go back to antiquity they must invent from books and statues. In short, Corinna thought that those pious pictures did the mind a benefit which nothing could be a substitute for, and supposed in the artist a holy enthusiasm, which mixes with genius, renews and revives it, and can alone support it against the disgusting circumstances of life, and the injustice of mankind.

Oswald received in some respects a very different impression. At first he was almost shocked at seeing the face of the di-

vinity represented in painting with the features of a man, as Michael Angelo has done. He conceived that thought would not dare to assign the Deity a form, and that it was almost impossible to find out in the bottom of the heart an idea sufficiently intellectual and ethereal to exalt it to the Supreme Being. As to subjects taken from the Bible, he thought that both the expression and the imagery of those pictures fell far short of their subject. He thought with Corinna, that religious meditation is the most profound of all sentiments which man can feel, and that on that account it is what furnishes painters with the best ideas of look and countenance; but as religion represses all emotions of the heart that do not proceed from its source, the figures of the saints and martyrs cannot have much variety. That feeling of humility which is so noble towards heaven weakens the energy of earthly passions, and gives necessarily a monotony to most of the religious sub-

jects. When Michael Angelo, with his talents for inspiring terror, wished to paint those subjects, he almost destroyed the spirit of them by giving his prophets a powerful and formidable expression, which made them look more like Jupiter than saints. He often, like Dante, makes use of the imagery of paganism, and blends mythology with christianity. One of the most wonderful circumstances in the establishment of christianity was the vulgar condition of the apostles who first preached it, and the servitude and misery of the Jewish nation, which was so long the depositary of those promises which announced the coming of Christ. This contrast between the feebleness of the means and the greatness of the result is very fine in a moral point of view, but in painting, when the means only can be made to appear, christian subjects must be much less brilliant than those drawn from heroic and fabulous times. Among the arts music is the only one which can be entirely

religious. Painting cannot content itself with an expression so mournful and vague as that of sounds. It is true that the happy combination of colours, and of the *chiaro obscuro* produce, if we may use the phrase, a sort of musical effect in painting; but as it represents the life, one expects from it the expression of the passions in all their energy and diversity. Without doubt one ought to choose those historical facts which are sufficiently well known not to require any study to understand them, for the effect produced by pictures ought to be immediate and rapid, like all the pleasures produced by the fine arts; but when the historical facts are as well known as religious subjects, they have an advantage over them in the variety of the situations and sentiments which they retrace.

Lord Nelvil also thought that they should prefer for paintings subjects either taken from tragedies, or else from the most

affecting of the poetic fictions, in order that all the pleasures of the imagination might be united with those of the soul. Corinna combatted this idea, captivating as it was. She was convinced that the encroachment of one art upon another spoiled them both. Sculpture loses its peculiar advantages when it aspires to group figures as in painting, and painting also loses its advantages when it aims at dramatic expression. The arts are bounded in their means, although not in their effects. Genius does not seek to combat what is in the nature of things: its superiority consists in discovering that nature. —"You, my dear Oswald," said Corinna, "do not love the arts in themselves, but only from their relation to sentiment or the soul. You are only moved when they retrace the sorrows of the heart. Music and poetry agree in this disposition, while those arts which speak only to the eyes, please and interest us only when our mind is tranquil, and our imagination perfectly

free. To enjoy them it requires not that gaiety which society inspires, but that serenity which is produced by a fine day or a fine climate. One must feel the universal harmony of nature to relish those arts which represent external objects, but when our mind is troubled we have not in ourselves that harmony, for misfortune has destroyed it." "I do not know," replied Oswald, "if I only seek in the fine arts what can reach the sufferings of the soul, but this I know, that I cannot bear to find in them the representation of bodily pain. My strongest objection," continued he, "to those christian subjects for painting is, the painful sensation that the representation of blood, and wounds, and tortures gives me, even although the victims may be animated by the noblest enthusiasm. Philoctetes is perhaps the only subject from tragedies in which bodily pain can well be admitted. But with how many poetical circumstances are not those cruel pains surrounded? They have been caused by the

arrows of Hercules. It is the son of Æsculapius who is to heal them. In fine, the wound is almost confounded with the moral resentment produced in him who is struck, and cannot excite any impression of disgust. But the figure of the man possessed with a devil, in the superb picture of the transfiguration by Raphael, is a disagreeable object, and has not the dignity of the fine arts. They should shew the charm of grief, as the melancholy of a state of prosperity; it is the idea of man's destiny which they should represent in each particular circumstance. Nothing distresses the imagination more than the representation of bleeding wounds, or convulsions of the nerves. It is impossible in such pictures not to seek for the accuracy of the imitation, and at the same time one fears to find it. What pleasure would an art give us that consisted only of such an imitation? It is more horrible, or less beautiful, than na-

ture herself, whenever the art aspires merely to a resemblance."

"You are in the right, my Lord," said Corinna, "to wish that those disagreeable images should be removed from christian subjects. They are not necessary. But confess, nevertheless, that genius, the genius of the soul, knows how to triumph. Look at the communion of St. Jerome by Dominichini. The body of the venerable dying man is livid and meagre. It is death itself which rises up before you, but in that look there is eternal life, and all the miseries of the world are placed there, only that they may disappear before the pure lustre of a religious feeling. However, my dear Oswald," continued Corinna, "although I am not of your opinion in every thing, I will shew you, that even when we differ we have always some analogy. I have tried your idea in the gallery of paintings, which the artists who

are my friends have collected for me, and from which I myself have sketched out some drawings. You will there see the defects and the advantages of those subjects of painting that you admire. That gallery is in my country house at Tivoli. The weather is fine enough to go and see it; shall we go there to-morrow?" She waited some time for his assent, when he replied: "my friend, can you doubt my answer? Have I another happiness in the world, any other idea but you? And my life, which is perhaps too free from occupation or interest, is it not entirely filled with the happiness of hearing and seeing you?"

CHAPTER IV.

THEY set out then the next morning for Tivoli. Oswald himself drove the four horses which drew them, and was pleased at their speed : a speed which appears to render more lively the sentiment of existence, and that impression is pleasing when one is by the side of the object that one loves. He drove with extreme attention, fearing that Corinna might meet with the slightest accident. He had all those protecting attentions which form the sweetest bond between man and woman. Corinna was not, like the generality of women, easily frightened by the dangers of a journey, but it was so pleasing to observe the solicitude of Oswald, that she almost wished to be afraid, that she might be encouraged by him.

What gave, as will be seen in the sequel, so great an ascendancy to Lord Nelvil over the heart of his friend, was the unexpected contrasts which lent a peculiar charm to his demeanour. Every body admired his genius and the grace of his figure, but he could not avoid interesting, in a peculiar degree, a woman who united in herself, by a singular combination, constancy and motion, and who took pleasure in those impressions which are at the same time varied and faithful. He was never occupied with any thing but Corinna, and this occupation perpetually assumed new forms. Sometimes reserve was predominant, at other times he gave himself up to gaiety. At one time you saw a perfect sweetness, and at another a gloomy bitterness, which proved the depth of his feelings, but caused some uneasiness, and made new emotions incessantly spring up. Oswald, much agitated within, endeavoured to restrain himself outwardly, and she who loved him, occupied in studying

him, found in this mystery a continual interest. One would have said, that the defects of Oswald were only intended to set off his agreeable qualities. No man, however distinguished he might be, but whose character did not present some contradiction and some conflict, would have so captivated the imagination of Corinna. She had a sort of fear of Oswald which enslaved her; he reigned over her soul both by a good and evil power, by his qualities, and by the uneasiness which those qualities, ill-combined, were capable of inspiring. In short, there was no security for that happiness which Lord Nelvil inspired, and perhaps it was this very fault which served most to exalt the passion of Corinna; perhaps she would not have loved to that excess any man whom she did not fear to lose. A superior mind, a sensibility as ardent as it was delicate, might be wearied of every thing except of this truly extraordinary man, whose varying soul appeared like the heavens, at one time se-

rene, and at another covered with clouds. Oswald, always sincere, profound, and impassioned, was often ready to renounce the object of his tender affections, because a long habit of suffering had made him believe that there could be nothing but remorse and uneasiness in too lively affections of the heart.

Lord Nelvil and Corinna, in their journey to Tivoli, passed before the ruins of the palace of Adrian, and of the immense garden which surrounded it There was assembled in this garden the rarest productions, and the most admirable *chef-d'œuvres* of the countries conquered by the Romans. One still sees there some scattered stones, bearing the names of Egypt, India, and Asia. Further on was the retreat where Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, ended her days. In adversity she did not support the grandeur of her station. She neither knew, like a man, to die for glory,

nor like a woman, to die sooner than betray her friend.

They at length discovered Tivoli, which had been the residence of so many illustrious men ; of Brutus, of Augustus, Mecenas, Catullus, and particularly of Horace, whose verses have illustrated this residence. The house of Corinna was built over the noisy cascade of the Teverone. At the top of the mountain, and in front of the garden, was the temple of the Sybil. It was a fine idea of the ancients to place their temples in the most elevated places. They seemed to rule over the country as religious ideas do over the mind. They inspired more enthusiasm for nature, in announcing the divinity from which it emanates, and the eternal gratitude of successive generations. The country, in whatever point of view one looked at it, formed an enchanting landscape with that temple,

which was placed as the centre and ornament of the whole. Ruins throw a peculiar charm over the country of Italy. They do not, like modern buildings, recall to the recollection the labour and the presence of man; they confound themselves with the trees and with nature. They appear in harmony with that solitary torrent, the image of time, which has made them what they are. The finest countries in the world, when they retrace no recollection, when they do not carry the stamp of any remarkable event, are without interest, when compared to classic ground. What place in Italy could be better suited for the habitation of Corinna than that abode which was consecrated to the Sybil, to the memory of a female endowed with divine inspiration. The house of Corinna was charming. It was adorned with all the elegance of modern taste, and nevertheless the charm of an imagination which takes pleasure in the beauties of antiquity was also to be perceived there.

One there observed a singular understanding of happiness in the most exalted sense of the word; that is to say, making it consist of every thing which enobles the soul, excites thought, and vivifies talent.

In walking with Corinna, Oswald perceived that the breeze had a harmonious sound, and scattered notes which appeared to come from the motion of the trees and flowering shrubs, and to give a voice to nature. Corinna told him that these were Eolian harps that were played upon by the wind, and which she had placed in some grottos of the garden to fill the atmosphere with sweet sounds as well as perfumes. In this delicious dwelling Oswald was inspired with the purest sentiments. "Hear me!" said he to Corinna; "Until this day I experienced remorse at being happy near you; but now I say to myself that it is my father who has sent you to me that I may no more be unhappy in this world. If it is him

whom I have offended, yet it is his prayers in heaven which have obtained me pardon. Corinna! cried he, throwing himself upon his knees, I am pardoned. I feel it in this innocent and sweet calm that reigns in my heart. You may without fear unite yourself to my destiny, there will be no more fatalities." "Well," replied Corinna, "Let us enjoy for some time that peace of heart which is granted to us. Let us not touch upon destiny. It gives us so much alarm when we wish to interfere with it, and when one endeavours to obtain more than it will grant. Oh! my friend, let us make no change since we are happy."

Lord Nelvil was hurt at the answer of Corinna. He thought that she ought to have comprehended that he was ready to tell every thing to her, to promise every thing to her, if she would then confide to him her history. This manner of avoiding to do so offended as well

as afflicted him. He did not perceive that a sentiment of delicacy hindered her from profiting by his emotion, and binding him by a vow. Perhaps also it belongs to a profound and sincere attachment to dread a solemn moment, however it may be desired, and tremblingly to exchange hope for happiness itself. Oswald, far from judging in the same manner, persuaded himself that Corinna, although she loved, wished to preserve her independence, and that she wished to remove to a distance every thing which might lead to an indisputable engagement. This thought made him experience a painful irritation of mind; and immediately assuming an air of coldness and reserve, he followed Corinna into the gallery of paintings, without saying a single word. She soon guessed the impression she had produced on him, but knowing his pride, she durst not tell him what she observed; nevertheless, in shewing him her pictures, and in speak-

ing to him on general ideas, she had a vague hope of softening him, which gave to her voice a more touching charm, even when she spoke on indifferent subjects.

The gallery was composed of historical paintings, paintings from poetical and religious subjects, and landscapes. There were none which were not composed of a good number of figures. This style presents doubtless a number of difficulties, but it gives less pleasure. The beauties that one finds in them are too confused or too detailed. The unity of interest, that vital principle in the arts as in every thing else, is necessarily parcelled out. The first of the historical paintings represented Brutus in profound meditation, seated at the foot of the statue of Rome. In the back ground slaves are carrying the dead bodies of his sons, whom he himself condemned to death; and on the other side of the picture, the mother of his sons and their sisters are abandoning them-

selves to despair; women being happily dispensed from that sort of courage which causes the sacrifice of the affections of the heart. The statue of Rome placed near Brutus, is a fine idea; it is that which expresses every thing. Nevertheless, without an explanation, how could one know that it was Brutus the elder who had sent his sons to banishment? and nevertheless it is impossible to characterize this subject more strongly than it has been done in this picture. In the back ground there is a view of Rome, at that time simple, without public buildings, without ornaments, but very great as a country, when it could inspire such a sacrifice. "Without doubt," said Corinna, "When I have named Brutus to you, your soul is touched with this picture, and yet you might have seen it without guessing the subject of it; and this uncertainty, which almost always exists in historic paintings, does it not mix the torment of an enigma with the enjoyment of

the fine arts, which ought to be so easy and so clear?

" I have chosen this subject because it recalls the most terrible action which the love of country ever inspired. The companion to this picture is Marius, spared by Cimber, who could not resolve to kill this great man. The figure of Marius is imposing; the dress of Cimber and the expression of his countenance are very picturesque. This was the second epoch of Rome, when the laws no longer existed, but when genius had a great controul over circumstances. At last the time came when talents and glory only drew down misfortune and insult. This third picture represents Belisarius carrying upon his shoulders his young guide, who died while asking alms for him. Belisarius, blind and begging his bread, had been thus rewarded by his master; and he has no other employment in that world which he conquered, except

bearing to the tomb the body of that poor child, who alone never abandoned him. This figure of Belisarius is admirable, and since the time of ancient painters there has been scarce any thing so fine. The imagination of the painter has, like that of a poet, united all sorts of misfortune, and perhaps too many for pity; but what is there to tell us that this is Belisarius? Must not one be faithful to the history to recall it; and if one is faithful, will the piece be sufficiently picturesque? After those pictures which represent in Brutus virtues that resemble crimes; in Marius glory which causes his misfortunes; and in Belisarius services repaid by the blackest persecution; in short all the miseries of human destiny, which the events of history relate in their own manner, I have placed two pictures of the ancient school, which relieve a little the oppressed mind, by recalling that religion which has comforted the universe when enslaved and torn to pieces,

that religion which poured life into the bottom of the heart, when every thing without was oppression and silence. The first is from Alban; he has painted Christ when a child sleeping under the cross. See what sweetness, what calm there is in that countenance! what pure ideas it recalls; how it makes us feel that heavenly love has nothing to fear from pain or death. Titian is the painter of the second; it is Jesus Christ sinking under the weight of the cross. His mother comes to meet him; she throws herself on her knees when she sees him; an admirable instance of respect from a mother for the misfortunes and divine virtues of her son! What a look is that of Christ! What divine resignation, and at the same time what suffering, and by that suffering what sympathy with the heart of man!

"This is without doubt one of the finest of my pictures. It is that to which I incessantly look without ever being able to

exhaust the emotion it produces. After those," said Corinna, "come the dramatic paintings taken from the four great poets. Judge with me, my Lord, of the effect they produce. The first represents Æneas in the Elysian Fields, when he wishes to approach Dido. The indignant shade removes and applauds herself for no longer bearing in her breast that heart which beat with love at the sight of the guilty person. The watry colour of the shades, and the paleness which surrounds them, form a contrast with the appearance of life in Æneas and the Sybil who conducts him. This kind of effect is however only a trick of the artist, and the description of the poet is necessarily far superior to any thing that can be expressed in painting. I could say as much of this painting, Clorinda dying, and Tancred. The greatest effect it can produce is to recall the fine verses of Tasso, when Clorinda pardons her enemy who adores her, and yet comes to stab her. It is necessarily

making painting subordinate to poetry to consecrate it to subjects treated of by great poets; for there remains from their words an impression which effaces every other, and the situations which they have chosen almost always draw their principal force from the developement of the passions, and from their eloquence, while the greater part of picturesque effects spring from a calm beauty, from a simple expression, from a noble altitude, from a moment of repose worthy of being prolonged indefinitely, without the sight being ever weary of them.

"Your terrrible Shakespeare, my Lord, has furnished the subject of the third dramatic picture. This is Macbeth, the invincible Macbeth, who ready to fight Macduff, whose wife and children he has destroyed, learns that the oracle of the witches is accomplished, that Birnham wood appears to move to Dunsinane, and that he is fighting with a man born after

the death of his mother. Macbeth is conquered by fate, and not by his adversary. He holds his sword in a desperate hand; he sees that he is going to die, but he wishes to try if human force cannot prevail over destiny. Certainly there is is in this head a fine expression of disorder and of fury; of confusion and of energy; but how many of the poet's beauties was it not necessary to renounce? Can one paint Macbeth precipitated into guilt by the suggestions of ambition presented to him under the form of sorcery? How can one express the terror that he experiences; that terror which is however united with the most intrepid courage. Can one characterize the kind of superstition which oppresses him? That faith without dignity, that fatality of hell which weighs him down; his contempt for life, and his horror at death? Without doubt the countenance of a man is the greatest of all mysteries; but this countenance, fixed as it is in a picture,

can but ill express the depths of a single feeling. Contrasts, struggles, and events belong to the dramatic art. Painting can hardly represent what is successive. Time or motion does not exist for that art.

"The Phedra of Racine has furnished the fourth picture," said Corinna, in shewing it to Lord Nelvil. "Hippolytus, in all the beauty of youth and innocence, answers the perfidious accusations of his mother-in-law; the hero Theseus still protects his guilty spouse, whom he embraces with his conquering arm. Phedra has upon her face a grief which freezes one with terror, and her nurse, without remorse, encourages her in her crime. Hippolytus is perhaps handsomer in this picture than in Racine. He resembles more the bust of Meleager, inasmuch as no love for Aricia disturbs the impression of his noble and savage virtue; but is it possible to suppose that Phedra in the presence of Hippolytus could support her

false accusation? When she saw him innocent and persecuted, how could she avoid falling at his feet? An offended woman may commit an outrage against the man she loves in his absence, but when she sees him there is nothing in her heart but love. The poet has never placed Hippolytus in a scene with Phedra after she has calumniated him. The painter was obliged to groupe them, as he has done, in order to have the effect of contrast. But is not that a proof that there is such a difference between poetical and picturesque subjects, that it is better that poets should make verses from pictures, than that painters should take their pictures from the poets? Imagination ought always to precede thought, as the history of the human mind sufficiently proves."

While Corinna explained in this manner the pictures to Lord Nelvil, she stopt several times, in hopes that he would speak to her, but his wounded soul did

not shew itself by a single word; sometimes, indeed, when she expressed an idea which struck him, he sighed and turned away his head, that she might not perceive how far he was affected by it. Corinna, oppressed by this silence, sat down and covered her face with her hands; Lord Nelvil paced the room with a hurried step, he then approached Corinna, and was about to complain of what he experienced, but an inherent pride in his character enabled him to repress his emotion, and he again turned towards the paintings, as if waiting till Corinna should point out to him those that remained; she hoped much from this last effort; and making an exertion in her turn to appear calm, arose and said:—"My Lord, there still remain three landscapes to be examined; two have an allusion to some interesting ideas, but I am not partial to rural scenes, which are as insipid in painting as idyls, when they have no allusion to fable or history.

What appears to me much better, in this way, is the manner of Salvator Rosa, who represents, as you see in this painting, a rock, torrents and trees, without a single living being, unless the flight of a bird recal to you the idea of life. The absence of man in the midst of nature excites profound reflections. What will become of the earth when abandoned by men? A work without design, but nevertheless still beautiful, the mysterious influence of which can only be attributed to the Divinity.

"Here at last are two paintings, in which, according to me, history and poetry are happily blended in the landscape: the one represents the moment when Cincinnatus is invited by the consuls to quit his plough, and take the command of the Roman armies. In this landscape is displayed all the luxury of the south, its abundant vegetation, its burning sky, this air of smiling nature will be found even

in the appearance of the plants themselves; and this other painting, which is the contrast of that, represents the son of Caïrbar sleeping upon the tomb of his father. He has waited for three days and three nights for the bard who is to do honour to the memory of the dead. This bard is perceived in the distance, descending from the mountain; the shade of the father hovers above the clouds; the country is covered with hoar-frost; the trees, although stript of their foliage, are agitated by the winds; and their dead trunks and withered leaves yield to the violence of the storm."

Oswald had, until that moment, preserved his resentment at what had passed in the garden; but, at the sight of this painting, the tomb of his father, and the mountains of Caledonia, arose to his remembrance, and his eyes became filled with tears. Corinna took her harp, placed it before the picture, and began to sing

some Scottish ballads, the simple notes of which seemed to accompany the noise of the wind as it sighed through the valleys. She sung the farewel of a warrior on leaving his country and his mistress, and the words "*no more*" the most feeling and harmonious in the English language, she pronounced with the most touching expression. Oswald could no longer restrain his emotion, and both yielded without constraint to their tears. "Ah!" cried Lord Nelvil, "does not that country which is mine speak to your heart? Wilt thou not follow me into these retreats, endeared to me by so many delightful remembrances? Wilt thou not become the worthy companion of my life, as thou now art its charm and delight?"

"I believe it," answered Corinna, "I believe it, because I love." "In the name of love and pity conceal from me nothing," said Oswald. "Since you wish it," replied Corinna, "I yield. My pro-

mise is given, and I only insist on one condition, that you do not require the fulfilment of it before the approaching period of our religious solemnities. At the moment when I am about to decide my fate, is not the support of Heaven more than ever necessary to me?" "Go, then," cried Lord Nelvil: "if that fate depended upon me, Corinna, it would be no longer uncertain." "You believe," replied she, "that I have not the same confidence in you; but I conjure you to have pity on my weakness, and accord me what I desire." Oswald sighed, without granting or refusing the required delay. "Let us immediately set out, and return to the city. How can I be silent in this solitude; and if the history of my life should detach you from me, is it necessary that it should be so soon? Let us set off, Oswald; you will return here; whatever happens, my ashes shall repose in this spot." Oswald, much affected, yielded

to Corinna. He returned with her; and during the whole way they scarcely ever spoke. From time to time they regarded each other with looks more eloquent than language; but nevertheless a sentiment of profound melancholy had taken possession of their souls when they arrived at Rome.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

IT was the last day of the carnival; the most noisy of the whole year, in which the Roman people deliver themselves up to a tumultuous and delirious joy, of which we have no example in the history of any other people. All the inhabitants appear disguised, scarce a spectator is to be seen at a window unmasked; and neither public nor private calamity seems to prevent any individual from enjoying the amusements of the present season.

Then it is that we can form a judgment respecting the imagination of the great body of the people. The Italian is full of

beauty, even when spoken by them. Alfieri said that he went to Florence, on a market day, with no other view than to learn pure Italian. Rome possesses the same advantages; and these two cities are perhaps the only ones in the world in which the people speak so correctly, that amusement may be obtained by listening to them in every corner of the streets. The kind of gaiety, which shines so conspicuous in comic authors, and at the opera buffa is found very frequent even among men without education. During the continuance of the carnival, when exaggeration and caricature of every kind are licensed, the most comic scenes are frequently displayed by the different masks. Often the grotesque gravity assumed, appears singularly contrasted with the usual vivacity of the Italians; and it may be even said that their fantastic dresses inspired them with a dignity not natural to them. At other times they display such an astonishing acquaintance with mytho-

logy, by the various disguises they assume, that a person is almost tempted to believe the ancient superstition still prevalent at Rome. Very frequently they ridicule and laugh at the different orders of society with a vein of wit and humour full of point and originality. The character of the nation shines more conspicuously in its sports and public festivals than in memorable actions and exploits. Such is the flexibility of the Italian language, and so happily is it adapted to express pleasurable emotions, that to render the meaning of words various and contrary, nothing more is necessary than to change the tone of the voice, or to employ terms only differing from each other in the termination. When spoken by children, it produces the most happy effect. The innocence peculiar to this period of life, and the equivocal meaning affixed to many Italian words and terms, form a striking contrast. In short, this language appears, so to speak, to proceed of itself, and always conveys to

the heart more than is meant by the speaker.

There is neither luxury nor good taste in the amusements of the carnival; a sort of universal petulance prevails, which may be termed an intoxication of the imagination, but it is of the imagination alone, for the Italians are in general very sober, and even serious, except during the last days of the carnival. It is then that the true character of this people is displayed; and it is this which contributes to give them the reputation of great cunning. They are doubtless in the habit of practising much dissimulation in this country which has supported so many foreign yokes; but it is not to dissimulation alone we must attribute the facility with which they can assume so many different characters. An ardent imagination is frequently the cause. To an enlightened mind this part of their character is not wonderful, but to a common observer the

effects of the imagination is totally unattended to. It vaults over intermediate space; nothing retards its flight; and sometimes it is wholly unmoved by incidents the most affecting. In short, imagination is wholly wrapt up in itself; and it is impossible, from apparent causes, to calculate the impressions made on minds subjected to its influence.

For example, we cannot conceive what amusement an Italian lord can find in driving from one corso to another, either during the carnival, or at any other time; yet nothing interrupts this habit. There are likewise observed among the masks men who move about with the greatest listlessness, in the most ridiculous costume, like melancholy *harlequins*, or silent *punchinellos*, without uttering a single word during the whole evening, but who nevertheless seem to be perfectly gratified with having attended the carnival.

We find in Rome a kind of masks which are not to be met with any where else. They are imitations of the figures of ancient statues, and which though far from perfectly beautiful, frequently conceal the deformity of the wearers. Yet this imitation of life, these moving wax visages, however beautiful they may be, create a sort of terror. The nobles make an ostentatious display of their wealth in their carriages during the last days of the carnival; but the pleasures of this fete consists merely in uproar and confusion; it reminds us of the *Saturnalia of the Romans*, all classes of the inhabitants mingle together; the Italian magistrate is to be seen in his chariot, in all the pomp of his official dignity, in the midst of the masks; the windows of every house are decorated, the inhabitants are all in the streets: this may truly be termed a popular fete. The pleasure of the people consists neither in the spectacles, the festivals, nor the

magnificence of which they are witnesses; neither does it consist in rioting or drunkenness. Their happiness proceeds solely from finding themselves at liberty, and being permitted to mix with the grandees and superior orders of the inhabitants, who in their turn are amused by finding themselves among the *people*. It is especially the refinement and delicacy of our amusements, that place a barrier between the different classes of society; and it is in this also that the perfection of education consists. But in Italy the different ranks are not so sensibly separated as in other countries, as its inhabitants are more distinguished for their natural talents, and the vigour of their imagination, than for the superior cultivation and the education of the higher orders. There is then, during the carnival, a complete unison of feeling and acting among all ranks; and the noise, the jests, and the *sugar-plumbs*, with which they overwhelm the carriages as they pass, exhibit such a scene of con-

fusion, as if social order was completely destroyed.

Corinna and Lord Nelvil, alike thoughtful and pensive, arrived in the midst of this tumult. They were at first stunned by it; for nothing is more dissonant than noisy and active pleasures to a mind absorbed in itself. They stopped at the market-place, to ascend the amphitheatre near the obelisk, from whence they might see the races. At the moment when they were alighting from their carriage, Count d'Erfeuil perceived them, and took Oswald aside to speak to him.

"It is not right," said the Count to him, "for you to appear thus publicly after arriving alone from the country with Corinna, you will expose yourself by it; and what will become of you afterwards?" "I do not believe," answered Lord Nelvil, that I expose Corinna, in shewing the attachment with which she inspires me.

But were that true, I should be too happy in consecrating to her my life." "Alas! as for happiness," interrupted the Count d'Erfeuil, "I do not believe it; there is no happiness but in doing what is right. Society has much influence over the happiness of individuals, and actions the world does not approve should never be committed."

"We should then only live for the world," replied Oswald, "and only be guided by it. Were that to be the case, were we constantly to imitate each other, of what use is a different body and soul to each individual? Providence might have spared this useless provision."

"That is well said," replied the count, "very philosophically thought; but with these maxims we may lose ourselves, and passion once over, the folly of the opinion alone remains. I who appear to you fool-

ish and inconsiderate, I would never commit an action which might draw upon me the disapprobation of the world. It will allow you little liberties and innocent amusements, with independence in your manner of thinking, provided you do not show it in your manner of acting—but that is serious"——"Serious!" replied Lord Nelvil, "it is love and happiness."—"No, no," interrupted the Count, "it is not respecting that I wish to speak; there are certain established customs which we could not brave, without passing for an eccentric character, for a man—but, you understand, for a man like no one else." Lord Nelvil smiled, but without anger or uneasiness he jested with the Count upon his foolish severity; he felt with joy, for the first time, that Count d'Erfeuil had not the smallest influence over him on a subject which caused him so much emotion. Corinna, from a distance, had divined all that passed between them;

but the smile that illumined the countenance of Lord Nelvil restored peace to her heart; and this conversation of the Count d'Erfeuil, far from disturbing Oswald and his mistress, inspired them with feelings more analogous to the festival.

The race-ground was prepared. Lord Nelvil expected to see races similar to those in England; but he was astonished to learn that little horses were to run alone without riders against each other. This spectacle wonderfully attracted the attention of the Romans. At the moment it was about to commence the multitude range themselves on both sides of the street. The market-place, which was before crowded, becomes empty in a moment. Every one ascends the amphitheatre which surrounds the obelisk; and innumerable multitudes of heads and black eyes are turned towards the place from whence the horses are to start.

They are brought without bridle or saddle, only covered with a piece of brilliant stuff, and led by the grooms, very well habited, who take a warm interest in their success. They place the horses behind the starting-post, and their eagerness to leap it is excessive. Every moment they are withheld they prance, they neigh, and clatter with their feet, as if impatient of the glory they were alone to obtain without the direction of man. The impatience of the horses, and the cries of the grooms, at the instant the barrier is let down, is truly theatrical, and must surprise a stranger. They start; the grooms cry *place, place* (make room), with inexpressible transport. They pursue their horses with their gestures and voice as long as they can perceive them. The horses are as jealous of each other as men; the pavement sparkles beneath their feet, their manes fly, and their desire to gain the prize, thus abandoned to themselves, is such, that when they arrive they are al-

most dead with the rapidity of their course. It is wonderful to behold horses at liberty thus animated by personal passions.

The crowd break their ranks when the horses have passed, and follow them in tumult. They arrive at the square of Venice, which is the goal. You will then hear the exclamations of the groom whose horses have been victors. He who has won the first prize throws himself on his knees before his horse, thanks him, and recommends him to St. Anthony, the patron of animals, with an enthusiasm as serious in him as ludicrous to the spectators.

These races generally conclude about the end of the day. They then begin another sort of amusement much less picturesque, but also very noisy. The windows are illuminated. The sentinels abandon their posts to mingle themselves in

the general tumult. Every one has a little flambeau called *moccolo,* which they mutually seek to extinguish, and repeating the *ammazzare* (to kill) with much vivacity. *(Che la bella Principessa sia ammazato! Che il Signiore Abbate sia ammazzato!)* "Let the most beautiful Princess be killed! Let the Lord Abbot be killed!" cry they from one end of the street to the other. The crowd knowing themselves safe, because at this hour all carriages and horses are prohibited, precipitate themselves on every side. At last, satiated with pleasure, the noise and tumult, as night advances, dies away by degrees; and it is succeeded by the most profound silence, which leaving on the mind only the impression of a confused dream, makes us forget for a moment the world, its works, its learned men, their studies, and the distinctions and vices of society.

CHAPTER II.

OSWALD, since his misfortune, had not yet felt sufficient courage to listen to music. He dreaded those ravishing sounds which yield a melancholy pleasure, but produce the most painful sensations in the mind oppressed with grief. Music awakes recollections we wish to obliterate. When Corinna sung, Oswald listened to the words she pronounced; he contemplated the expression of her features; he was occupied with her alone; but when in the streets, at night, several voices joined, as often happens in Italy, to sing the most beautiful airs of their great masters, he tried at first to remain and listen to them, but was obliged to retire, because they raised in his mind such lively and varied emotions, and at the same time renewed all

his griefs. There was, however, to be a grand concert at Rome, where the first singers were collected. Corinna had engaged Lord Nelvil to accompany her to this entertainment; and he consented, hoping that her presence would spread a charm over all he should experience.

On entering the concert-room, Corinna was immediately recognised; and the remembrance of the *Capitol*, adding to the interest she generally inspired, the room resounded with applauses at her arrival. On all sides was heard the cry of *Long live Corinna!* and the musicians themselves, electrified by this general movement, began to play martial airs; for triumph, of whatever kind, always recals war and combats to the mind of man. Corinna was deeply affected by these universal testimonies of admiration and good will. The music, the applause, the *bravo*, and that indescribable impression which is always produced by a great multitude, when

they express the same idea, caused an emotion in the mind of Corinna which she vainly endeavoured to suppress; her eyes filled with tears, and the palpitation of her heart was visible through the robe which covered her bosom. Oswald experienced some jealousy, and, approaching her, said, in a low voice: "Far be it from me, Madam, to withdraw you from such encomiums, since they are equally capable as love of agitating your heart." And on finishing these words he retired to the farthest corner of the saloon, without waiting for an answer. She was much affected by what he had said, and was instantly bereaved of all the pleasure she had experienced by this applause, and of which she delighted he should be a witness.

The concert began: those who have not heard the Italians sing can form no idea of *music*. The voices in Italy possess a flexibility and sweetness similar to the perfume of their flowers, and the mild-

ness of their sky. Nature has destined this music for the climate: the one is the emblem of the other. The world is the work of a single thought, which is expressed under a thousand different forms. The Italians have for ages been passionate lovers of music. Dante, in his poem of Purgatory, meets one of the best singers of his time, and requesting one of his delightful airs, the ravished souls forget themselves in listening to it, till recalled by the voice of their guardian angel.

The Christians, as well as the Pagans, believe in the power of music after death. Of all the fine arts, it is that which acts most instantaneously upon the mind. The others direct it to such or such an idea, that alone addresses itself to the intimate source of life, and wholly changes the disposition of the mind. What has been said of divine grace, which can instantly transform the heart, may, humanly speaking, be applied to the power of melody;

and among the presentiments of a future life, those which give birth to music, ought not to be disdained.

Even the gaiety which that sort of music called *buffa* knows so well how to excite, is not a low gaiety which does not effect the imagination. With the joy it excites there is also an agreeable pensiveness that the most comic speeches could never inspire. Music is a pleasure so fleeting, that we feel its escape so much the more, not only in proportion as we experience a melancholy impression mingled with the gaiety it causes; but also, when it expresses grief, it gives birth to a most delightful sensation. The heart throbs with more rapidity in listening to it; the satisfaction which the regularity of the measure causes, in recalling the shortness of time, bestows upon us the power of enjoying it. There is no longer a vacuum; we are no longer in the midst of silence, life is filled up, the blood circu-

lates more freely, we experience an internal feeling of a more active existence, and are no longer afraid of the obstacles we may have to encounter.

Music multiplies the ideas we entertain respecting the faculties of the soul; when listening to it we feel capable of the most noble efforts. It is by it we could march to death with enthusiasm; happily it has not the power of expressing base sentiments, cunning, or untruth. Even misfortune itself, in the language of music, is without bitterness, and without despair. Music gently relieves the weight almost always experienced by the heart capable of deep and profound attachments: this weight, which we sometimes confound even with the sentiment of existence, so habitual, is the melancholy it produces; it seems as if, when listening to its pure and delightful sounds, we were about to penetrate the secrets of the Almighty, to penetrate the mystery of our existence. No

words can express the impression made on the mind by music, for words follow the first impressions, as translators in prose follow the steps of the poet. It is only a look can convey to the mind some idea of these feelings; the looks of a beloved object for a long time fixed on the countenance, and by degrees penetrating so much into the heart, that it is at last necessary to cast down the eyes, in order to deprive ourselves of such exquisite happiness: as the radiance of another life will consume the mortal who wished to consider it attentively.

The admirable regularity sustained by the union of two similar voices, produces in the duets of the great Italian masters a most delightful effect, but which cannot be prolonged without experiencing a sensation of grief much too great for human nature, and the soul then vibrates in unison, like an instrument which is broken by a too perfect harmony.

During the first part of the concert, Oswald had obstinately remained at a distance from Corinna; but when the duet commenced in an undertone, accompanied by the wind instruments, which sent forth sounds even sweeter than those of the voice, Corinna covered her face with her handkerchief, wholly given up to her emotion; she wept without suffering! she loved without fearing! Doubtless the image of Oswald was present to her imagination; but the most noble enthusiasm was mingled with this image, and the most confused thoughts crowded into her mind: it was necessary to arrange these ideas, and render them distinct. It is said that a prophet can traverse seven different regions of the heavens in a minute. He who could conceive that all this might happen in an instant, must surely have heard the symphony of the finest music when seated by the object of his affections. Oswald felt its power; his resentment abated by degrees. The tender feel-

ings of Corinna explained every thing, justified every thing: he gently approached her, and Corinna heard him respire near her at the most enchanting moment of that celestial music: this was too much. The most pathetic tragedy would not have excited such painful sensations as the deep and profound emotion which penetrated, at the same time, the minds of the lovers, and which every instant exalted them more and more above themselves.

The words that were sung did not produce this emotion; for excepting some expressions concerning *love* and *death*, that, from time to time, excited reflection, much oftener did the sweet tones of the music absorb all the faculties of the soul, and each believed that in this melody, as in the clear and gentle star of night, might be found the image of what was most desirable on earth.

"Let us retire," said Corinna to Lord Nelvil; "I feel extremely faint." "For heaven's sake, what is the matter?" said Oswald to her with anxiety: "you turn pale; let me lead you to the air; come." And they went out together. Corinna supported herself on the arm of Oswald, and felt renovated strength. They approached a balcony; and Corinna, deeply affected, said to her lover: "Dear Oswald, I must leave you for eight days."—"What do you say?" interrupted he.—"Every year," replied she, "at the approach of the holy week, I go and pass some time in a convent of nuns, in order to prepare myself for the solemnity of the passover." Oswald made no opposition to this design; he knew that it was customary, at this period, for the greatest part of the Italian ladies to give themselves up to the most severe practices, without occupying themselves very seriously with religion during the rest of the year; but it

recalled to his remembrance that Corinna professed a different faith from his, and that they could not worship together. "Why," cried he, "are you not of the same religion, of the same country as I?" —and then he stopped, after having pronounced this wish. "Are not our souls and spirits of the same country?" replied Corinna. "That is true," replied Oswald; "but I do not, on that account, suffer the less grief at our separation." And this eight days absence affected him so much, that after the friends of Corinna rejoined them, he did not utter another word during the whole evening.

CHAPTER III.

AT an early hour on the following morning Oswald went to the house of Corinna. Her attendant delivered him a billet from her mistress, which announced to him her departure for the convent that morning, as she had before informed him, and that she would not return till after Good Friday. She confessed to him that she had not courage to inform him on the preceding evening that she was so soon to depart. Oswald was thunderstruck; that house in which he had always beheld Corinna, and which was become so desolate, made the most disagreeable impression upon him. He beheld her harp, her books, her drawings, by which she used to be constantly surrounded; but she was no longer there! Oswald was seized with

a cold shivering; he recalled to mind the chamber of his father, and was forced to sit down, being no longer able to support himself.

"How shall I support her loss! that mind so animated, that heart so feeling, that figure shining in all the graces of youth and beauty! should she perish, and the tomb of youth become mute like that of an old man! Alas! what an illusion is happiness! what a moment stolen from inflexible time, which always watches for its prey! Corinna! Corinna! I cannot exist without you; it was your allurements that prevented reflection; everything is confounded in my mind, dazzled as I was by the happy moment I spent in your company; I am now alone; I can think, and all my sufferings are renewed." And he called upon Corinna in a voice of despair, which could not be attributed to such a short absence, but to the habitual anguish of his heart, which the presence

of Corinna alone had the power of alleviating. Corinna's attendant entered: she had heard the groans of Oswald; and touched by his grief for her mistress, said to him: "My Lord, I will console you by betraying the secret of my mistress; I hope that she will pardon it. Come into her bed chamber, you will there see your portrait."—"My portrait!" cried he. "She has painted it from memory," replied Theresina, the name of the attendant, "she has risen for these eight days past at five o'clock in the morning, in order to finish it before retiring to the convent."

Oswald beheld this portrait, which was a striking likeness, and painted with much grace and spirit: this proof of the impression he had made upon Corinna penetrated him with the most delightful emotion. In front of this portrait was placed a charming painting of the Virgin, and the oratory of Corinna was before it. This singular mixture of love and religion

is not unusual in the character of the greatest part of the Italian females, and which is frequently displayed in a much more extraordinary manner than in the apartment of Corinna; for, though free, the remembrance of Oswald was united in her soul with hopes and sentiments the most pure; but, nevertheless, thus to place the image of him we love opposite an emblem of divinity, and to prepare oneself for a retreat in a cloister, by eight days consecration to that image, was a trait more characteristic of Italian women in general, than of Corinna in particular. That species of devotion indicates more of imagination and sensibility than reflection, or rigid principles, and nothing was more contrary to the ideas of Oswald, respecting the manner of expressing a sense of religion; nevertheless, how could he blame Corinna, at the moment when he had just received such an affecting proof of her love!

He cast his eyes with emotion around this room, which he had never before entered. At the head of Corinna's bed he beheld the portrait of an old man, but whose countenance exhibited no proof of his Italian origin. Near this portrait were two bracelets, the one set with black and gray hair, and the other with beautiful fair hair; and what appeared to Lord Nelvil a singular coincidence, this hair was perfectly similar to that of Lucilia Edgermond, which he had during three years very frequently remarked on account of its great beauty. Oswald viewed these bracelets in silence; for to interrogate Theresina respecting her mistress was unworthy of him. But Theresina believing she had guessed what was passing in the mind of Oswald, and wishing to spare him the pangs of jealousy, hastened to inform him, that during the eleven years she had been in the service of Corinna, she had always been in possession of the bracelets, and she knew they contained the

hair of her father, mother, and sister. "If you have been eleven years in the service of Corinna," observed Lord Nelvil, "you must know—and then suddenly stopping, ashamed of the question he had been about to put, precipitately quitted the house without uttering another word."

While retiring he frequently turned about, and cast a look at the windows of Corinna's apartment; but, when the house was no longer within his view he felt himself unhappy, and experienced a melancholy fortitude. During the evening, he went into company with the view of abstracting his mind from gloomy reflections; for, in order to find pleasure in solitude, it is necessary in happiness, as well as in misery, to be at peace with ourselves.

Company, however, soon became insupportable to Lord Nelvil; he now felt more fully all the charms and interest

which Corinna's presence never failed to infuse into society, by remarking the void her absence had produced. He attempted to enter into conversation with some females, who replied to him in the common insipid phrases of the day. He approached several groupes of men, who by their gestures and voice, seemed to be discussing some important subject with much warmth, and found them thus interested by the most trifling matters. He sat down to contemplate at his leisure that vivacity without object, and without reason, which is most commonly found in numerous assemblies; nevertheless, mediocrity is sufficiently respected in Italy; it possesses little vanity, little jealousy, much good will towards superior minds; and if it fatigues by its dulness, it at least never wounds by its pretensions.

It was, however, in these assemblies that Oswald had found so much interest a few days before; the slight obstacle the

great world opposed to his conversation with Corinna, the care she always took to turn towards him when she had been sufficiently polite to others, the similarity of their feeling respecting society; the pleasure Oswald experienced when Corinna indirectly addressed to him reflections of which he alone comprehended the true import, so much varied the conversation, that every thing in this saloon recalled to the mind of Oswald the sweet and delightful moments which he had passed in it with the idol of his heart, and which rendered even such assemblies entertaining.—"Alas!" said he when retiring, "here, as in all places of the world, it is she alone who gives animation to the scene; let me rather go into the most desert places until she return. I shall feel her absence less grievously when there is nothing around me resembling pleasure.

BOOK X.

CHAP. I.

THE HOLY WEEK.

OSWALD passed the following day in the gardens of some monasteries. He went first to the convent of the Chartreuse, and stopped some time before entering, to contemplate two Egyptian lions placed at a little distance from the gate. These lions have a remarkable expression of strength and tranquillity; there is something in their physiognomy which belongs neither to the animal nor to man: they seem a kind of superior being in nature, and on beholding them we conceive that the gods of paganism might not inaptly be represented under this emblem.

The convent of the Chartreuse is built upon the ruins of the baths of the Emperor Dioclesian, and the church which stands at the side of the convent, is decorated by the colums of granite which were found standing. The monks who inhabit this monastery are officious in showing themselves; they are only attached to the world by the interest they take in its fall. The life led by the Chartreuse indicates either a mind extremely feeble, or capable of the most noble and exalted enthusiasm; this succession of days without variety recalls to remembrance the following line:—

Sur les mondes détruits le temps dort immobile.

It appears as if life only served to contemplate death! Vivacity of ideas, with such an uniformity of existence, would be the most cruel of punishments. In the midst of the cloister rose four cypress trees, that emblem of death, which the wind scarcely agitates. Near these trees

is a fountain, the *jet-d'eau* of which is so slow and feeble as scarcely to be heard, and might answer as an hour-glass in this solitude, where time glides on with such uniform regularity. Sometimes the moon penetrates with its pale light this abode of solitude and silence, and its absence and return form a kind of variety in this monotonous place.

The men who thus exist are notwithstanding the same to whom war and all its activity would scarcely be sufficient, were they accustomed to it. The different combinations of human destiny is an inexhaustible source of reflection. A thousand accidents passes in the interior of the soul; there is formed a thousand habits which form a world within each individual. To know another perfectly would be the study of a whole life; what is it then we understand by knowing men? Perhaps to govern them; to understand them belongs only to the Almighty.

Oswald, from the convent of the Chartreuse, bent his steps towards that of Bonaventura, built upon the ruins of the palace of Nero; on that spot where so many crimes have been committed without remorse, the poor monks, tormented by scruples of conscience, impose the most severe penance for the slightest faults. "*We only hope,*" said one of these monks, "*that at the moment of death our sins shall not have exceeded our repentance.*"

Lord Nelvil, on entering the monastery, struck his foot against a trap door, and he enquired into its use.—"It is there we are interred," said one of the young monks, who was already affected by the impure air of this place. "The inhabitants of the south are much afraid of death; they are astonished at finding institutions which recal this idea to mind; but it is natural to be pleased with delivering oneself up even to an idea we

dread. It is like the intoxication of sadness, which benefits the mind by occupying it entirely.

An ancient sarcophagus of a young infant serves as the fountain of this convent. The beautiful palms of which Rome boasts, are the only trees in the gardens of this monastery; but they pay no attention to external objects. Their discipline is much too rigorous to allow their minds any sort of freedom. Their looks are cast towards the earth, their step is slow, they possess no longer any volition. They have resigned the government of themselves, so much does this power *fatigue its sorrowful possessor!* This abode, notwithstanding, did not make a deep impression on the mind of Oswald; the soul revolts against an intention so manifest of presenting the remembrance of death under all its various shapes. When this remembrance is unexpectedly recalled, when nature speaks to us and not man, the impression we receive is much more profound.

The most soothing and delightful sensations took possession of the mind of Oswald; when at sunset he entered the garden of *San Giovanni and Paolo*. The monks of this order are subjected to less severe duties, and their garden overlooks the ruins of ancient Rome. We see from thence the Coliseum, the Forum, and all the triumphal arches yet standing, the obelisks and columns. What a beautiful site for such an asylum! The monks console themselves for their insignificance, by contemplating the monuments raised by men who have long ceased to exist. Oswald walked a long time under the shade of the trees in the garden of the convent, which are reckoned the finest in Italy. These beautiful trees interrupt for a moment the view of Rome, as if to redouble our emotion on again beholding it. It was at that hour of the evening when all the clocks of Rome strike an *Ave Maria*:

—— squilla di lontano
Che paja il giorno pianger che si muore.

DANTE.

and the sound of the bells in the distance seemed to mourn the departure of the day.

The hour of evening prayers serves as a point from which they reckon time. In Italy they say: *I shall see you an hour before, or an hour after the Ave Maria;* and the periods of the day or the night are thus religiously designated. Oswald then enjoyed the beautiful spectacle of the sun, which towards evening slowly descends to the middle of the ruins, and seems for a moment to yield to decay like the works of man: Oswald felt his habitual thoughts renewed. Corinna herself possessed too many charms, promised too much happiness to occupy him at this moment. He sought the shade of his father in the midst of the celestial shadows which had gathered around him. It appeared as if by the force of love he could animate by his looks the clouds he contemplated, and arrive at them by making them assume the sublime and touching

form of his immortal friend; he hoped that his prayers would obtain from heaven, I know not what pure and beneficent breath which should resemble the benediction of a father.

CHAPTER II.

THE desire of becoming acquainted with, and studying the Romish religion, determined Lord Nelvil to seek the first opportunity of hearing some of the numerous preachers who make the churches of Rome resound during lent. He counted the days that would re-unite him to Corinna; and so long as her absence continued, he felt himself disinclined to frequent places of public amusement, or to contemplate any of the master-pieces of art to be seen in that city. He could not support the emotions they excited in his mind when unaccompanied by Corinna; he would have blamed himself for partaking of any amusement without her; poetry, painting, music, all that embellishes life by vague hopes, only served to

render him more unhappy when absent from her he adored.

It is in the evening, and with the lights almost extinguished, that the clergy at Rome preach, during the holy week, in all the churches. The women are then clothed in black, in commemoration of the death of our Saviour; and there is something extremely affecting in this anniversary, renewed for so many ages. It is then with deep emotion we arrive in the middle of these beautiful churches, where the contemplation of the tombs so well prepare the mind for meditation and prayer; but the preacher in a few moments dissipates this emotion.

His pulpit is a long tribune, which he constantly traverses from one end to the other. He never fails to set out at the commencement of a phrase, and to return at the end of it, like the balance of a pendulum; nevertheless he makes so

many gesticulations, and with an air so passionate, as to appear capable of the most complete abstraction. But it is, if we may thus express it, a sort of systematic enthusiasm, very common in Italy, where the vivacity of the external motions indicate often only superficial feelings.

A crucifix is suspended from the end of the pulpit; the preacher takes it down, kisses it, presses it to his heart, and then puts it back in its place, with the greatest indifference, when the pathetic part is ended. There is also another method of giving interest to what they say, and of which the preachers often make use; that is the square bonnet they wear upon their heads, which they put off and on with inconceivable rapidity. One of them fastened himself upon Voltaire, but particularly upon Rousseau, respecting the irreligion of the age. He threw his bonnet into the middle of the

pulpit, in order to represent Jean Jacques, and in this quality spoke to it and said: "*Well, Genevese philosopher, what have you to object to my arguments.*" He then remained silent for some moments, as if waiting for an answer; and the bonnet not replying, he replaced it on his head, and finished the conversation with these words: "*At present, as you are convinced, we will say no more.*"

These ludicrous scenes are very common among the preachers at Rome, who possess little real talent. Religion is respected in Italy as a law all powerful. It seduces the imagination by its customs and ceremonies; but its preachers occupy themselves less with its morality than with its dogmas, and their religious ideas appear not to penetrate into the bottom of the heart.

The sermons delivered from the pulpit, as well as their lectures on different bran-

ches of literature, consist wholly of common-place ideas. A bold or original thought would produce a sort of tumult in their minds at once ardent and sluggish.

There is in the sermons a certain routine of ideas and phrases. The one always follows the other; and this order would be deranged if the orator reflected upon what he should say. Christian philosophy, that which seeks the analogy of religion with human nature, is as little known among Italian preachers as any other species of philosophy. To think *upon religion* would be here nearly as bad as to think *against it*, so much are they attached to ceremonies and customs of every kind. The worship of the Virgin seems peculiarly congenial to the Italians, and to all southern nations, it appears to be allied in some manner to what is most pure and tender in their affections towards the fair sex. But the same hyperbolical language prevailed on this sub-

ject; and it is difficult to conceive how their gesticulations and discourse does not render ridiculous the most serious subjects.

In Italy we scarcely ever meet with a preacher who has a good accent, or employs an appropriate phraseology.

Oswald, fatigued with the monotony and affected manner of the preacher, went to the Coliseum in order to hear a capuchin, who was to officiate in the open air, at the foot of one of the altars erected in the midst of the inclosure termed the *Road of the Cross.*

What subject better calculated to excite eloquence than the aspect of this monument, than this arena, where *martyrs* have succeeded to *gladiators!* But nothing of this nature could be expected from the poor capuchin, who knew nothing of the history of men, but from

his own life. Nevertheless, to listen to his wretched discourse is a tax that must be paid by those who wish to view the affecting objects with which he is surrounded. The most numerous part of his auditory consists of the brotherhood of the Camaldules; they are clothed during their religious exercises in a kind of grey robe, which covers their whole body and head, leaving only two small openings for the eyes; it is thus that shadows should be represented. These men, thus concealed beneath their garments, prostrate their faces upon the earth, and strike their breasts. When the preacher throws himself upon his knees, crying *misericorde, et pitie!* the people also assume the same attitude, and repeat the same cry, which gradually dies away beneath the ancient porticoes of the Coliseum. It is then that a profound religious emotion is experienced; this appeal of suffering humanity to infinite goodness causes the innermost cords of the heart to vibrate. Os-

wald started at the moment when all the assembly fell on their knees; he remained standing, that he might not sanction a worship which he could not approve; but it cost him some pain not to associate publicly with men, who, whatever might be their opinion, prostrated themselves before God. Alas! was it not in reality, an invocation to celestial pity, equally becoming all men?

The people were much struck with the fine figure and foreign manners of Lord Nelvil, but not offended at his remaining standing; there is no people more tolerant than the inhabitants of Rome; they are accustomed to an influx of strangers, whose intention is merely to view the curiosities of the capital; and whether it be pride or indolence, they never seek to make converts to their way of thinking. Another yet more extraordinary trait in their character is, that during the holy week, there are many of them who inflict

upon themselves corporal punishments, though the church doors are at this period always open; they are taught to believe that to enter them is equally efficacious as the most severe penances. The Italians are not anxious about public opinion; they proceed uniformly towards the attainment of their object, without ever suspecting they are in the least degree influenced by vanity.

CHAPTER III.

THE ceremonies which take place during the holy week at Rome have often been described. Many foreigners arrive during lent to enjoy this spectacle; and as the music of the chapel of Sixtinus, and the illumination of St. Peter, are curiosities of their kind, it is natural they should attract much notice; but the expectation is not equally gratified by the ceremonies properly so called. The dinner of the twelve apostles, served by the pope; the washing of their feet by him; in short the different customs of this solemn period recall the most affecting ideas; but a thousand inevitable circumstances often destroy the interest and grandeur of this spectacle. All those who assist at it are not equally collected, equally

occupied with pious thoughts; these ceremonies so often repeated, are become a sort of mechanical exercise for those who mix in them; and the young priests often perform the service of the grand festivals with a degree of activity and flippancy little impressive.

These indefinite and mysterious rites so well suited to religion, are wholly dissipated by that sort of attention we cannot help paying to the manner in which each acquits himself in his functions. The avidity of some for the meats which are presented to them, and the indifference of others to the necessary genuflexions and prayers, very much detract from the solemnity of the festival.

The ancient *costume*, which is still worn by the ecclesiastics, ill agrees with the modern dress; the Greek bishop, with his long beard, appears the most respectably habited. The ancient customs also,

such as that of curtesying like the women, instead of bowing like the men, produces a very ludicrous effect. The whole is indeed truly ridiculous; antique and modern customs are blended together without care being taken to strike the imagination, or at least not to distract it. A dazzling and sublime worship in its outward forms is certainly very proper to fill the soul with the most elevated sentiments; but care should be taken that these ceremonies do not degenerate into a mere spectacle, where every one plays his part; where we are taught what is to be done, and at what moment to do it; when we are to commence prayer, and when finish to it; when to kneel, and when to rise again; the regularity of court ceremonies introduced into a temple, constrains the free emotions of the heart, which only gives to man the hope of approaching the divinity.

These observations are generally made

by foreigners; but the Italians themselves never weary of such ceremonies, and every year find new pleasure in them. A singular trait of the Italian character is, that the vivacity of their ideas never leads them to inconstancy, nor renders variety necessary. They are, in all cases, patient and persevering; their imagination embellishes whatever they possess; it employs their life without rendering it uneasy; they find every thing more magnificent, more striking, more beautiful than it is in reality; and whilst in others vanity consists in exhibiting their talents, the sanguine and vivacious disposition of the Italians makes them experience pleasure in the feeling of admiration.

Lord Nelvil expected, after what he had heard of the Italians, to have been much more gratified by the ceremonies of which take place during the holy week. He regretted the noble yet simple festivals of the English worship. He returned

home with the most painful impressions on his mind; nothing is more disagreeable than to remain indifferent to what ought to affect us; we believe our hearts are become callous; we believe that the power of enthusiasm over our mind is lost, without which the faculty of thinking would only serve to disgust us with life.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT Good Friday restored to Lord Nelvil all those religious emotions he regretted not having experienced on the preceding days.

Corinna's retirement was drawing to a close; he expected the happiness of again beholding her; the sweet hopes of sentiment accord well with piety; he has a false opinion of life who would despise its influence. Oswald went to the chapel of Sixtinus, to hear the celebrated *Miserere*, os much boasted of throughout Europe. He arrived in the evening, and saw those famous paintings of Michael Angelo, which represent the last day, painted with all the frightful force of this subject, and with all the talent of which he was master.

Michael Angelo had studied the writings of Dante; and the painter as well as the poet represents the heathen gods in the presence of Jesus Christ; but he generally converts paganism into the evil principle, and it is under the form of demons he characterizes the pagan fables.

We perceive on the vaulted roof of the chapel prophets and sybils, whose testimony has been adduced by the Christians; an immense number of angels surround them, and the whole painted vault seems as it were to bring us nearer heaven; but this heaven appears dark and dismal; the light of day scarcely penetrates through the windows, and thus serves rather to darken than to illuminate the paintings; the figures traced by M. Angelo, which are sufficiently commanding, are enlarged by the gloom through which they are seen; the incense, of which the very perfume conveys a funereal idea, fills the whole space, and prepares the mind to

receive the most profound and enthusiastic impressions from the music.

While Oswald was absorbed in the reflections which the surrounding objects produced, he beheld Corinna, whom he had never more expected to see, enter the tribune, behind the grate which separates them from the men: she was dressed in black, and pale from retirement. As soon as she perceived Oswald, she was forced to lean for support on the ballustrade. At this moment the *miserere* began.

The singers, who are habituated to this species of music, proceed from the tribune to the entrance of the vault; they who sing are not seen; the music seems, as it were, to hover in the air; and as at every instant the chapel becomes more gloomy by the decline of day, the effect is rendered very solemn and impressive. It was not that impassioned and voluptuous music to which Oswald and Corinna had

listened eight days before; but a devout melody, inspiring the mind to renounce the world and its pleasures. Corinna threw herself on her knees before the grate, and remained wrapt up in such profound meditation, that she was no longer sensible of the presence of Oswald. She felt as if, at this moment, she could resign life with pleasure; as if an angel was about to carry away on his pinions those divine emanations, sentiment, and reflection, back to their origiual source. Death then, so to speak, would only be a spontaneous act, a more ardent prayer of the mind.

The *miserere*, that is, *be merciful unto us*, is a psalm composed of verses which are chanted alternately in very different tones. By turns a celestial music is heard, and the following verse sung in recitative is murmured in a low and hollow voice; it seems, as it were, the reply of harsh and unbending minds to feeling hearts, and to resemble life when it deadens and repels

the fond wishes of noble spirits; when the choir resumes hope is re-animated, which the recitative again destroys; but this sensation must not be attributed to fear, but to disappointed enthusiasm. In fine, the last piece, more noble and affecting than all the others, leaves on the mind a delightful and heavenly impression. May God vouchsafe to impart to us a similar impression at the hour of death! When the torches are extinguished, and the night advances, the figures of the prophets and the sybils appear, like phantoms, enveloped in obscurity. A profound silence prevails, during which the soul is absorbed in meditation; and when the last sound dies away every one retires, slowly and without noise, seeming, as it were, to dread re-entering into the busy and tumultuous scenes of life.

Corinna followed the procession to the church of Saint Peter, which on such occasions is only lighted by an illumined

cross. This emblem of sorrow, shining singly in the august obscurity of that immense edifice, exhibits a striking representation of Christianity surrounded by the gloom of life. A pale and distant light is projected on the statues which decorate the tombs. The living, whom we perceive moving in crowds under these vaults, appear like pygmies, in comparison with the images of the dead. Surrounding the cross there is a space lighted up, in which the pope, and all the cardinals arranged behind him, prostrate themselves. They remain therein, nearly half an hour, in the most profound silence, and form a spectacle which it is impossible to view without emotion. We neither know what they crave, nor hear their secret groanings; they are worn down with age, and proceeding before us to the tomb. When we shall pass in our turn into this mansion, may God give us grace to ennoble our old age, that the decline of life may prove the harbinger of immortality.

Corinna likewise, the young and beautiful Corinna, knelt behind the train of priests, and the faint light which beamed on her face, gave it a pale hue, without diminishing the lustre of her eyes. Oswald contemplated her in this posture like a ravishing picture, and as an adored being. When her prayer was concluded she arose; Lord Nelvil ventured not to approach her, reverencing the religious meditation in which he believed her plunged; but she herself was the first to run up to him with a transport of joy, and this sentiment diffusing itself over all her actions, she received with inimitable grace and vivacity the congratulations of all those who had come to Saint Peter's, now become, as it were, a place of fashionable resort for those who wished to converse on pleasure, or on their own particular affairs.

Oswald was astonished at this rapid transition in her behaviour from impressions so very different; and although he

felt happy in the joy of Corinna, he was yet surprised at not discovering in her countenance any traces of those emotions which she had so lately experienced. He could not conceive how it was permitted to make this superb church, on so solemn an occasion, the coffee-house of Rome, in which all assembled to amuse themselves; and regarding Corinna in the middle of a circle speaking gaily, and not in the least attending to the objects around her, he conceived a distrust as to the steadiness of her character. Perceiving him at this moment, she suddenly left her party, and laying hold of the arm of Oswald, observed to him: "I have never yet conversed with you respecting my religious sentiments; permit me now to enter upon this subject, perhaps I may be happy enough to succeed in dissipating the chagrin visible in your countenance."

CHAPTER V.

"THE difference of our religions, my dear Oswald," continued Corinna, "is the cause of the secret dissatisfaction you experience towards me, and which you in vain endeavour to conceal. Yours is rigid and serious, ours lively and tender. It is generally believed that the catholic religion is more rigorous than the protestant, and this perhaps may be true in countries where a struggle has existed between the two religions; but in Italy we have had no religious dissentions, and in England you have experienced too many; the result of which has been, that the catholic faith has assumed in Italy a character of mildness and indulgence, and that in order to destroy catholicism in England, the

Reformation has armed religion with greater severity in theory and practice. Our religion, like that of the ancients, encourages the arts, inspires poets, and makes a part, so to speak, of all the enjoyments of our life; while that of yours, established in a country where reason predominates over imagination, has acquired a character of moral austerity, from which it cannot be separated. Ours speaks in the name of love, yours in the name of duty. Your principles are liberal, our dogmas are absolute; yet nevertheless, in their application, our orthodox despotism accommodates itself to particular circumstances, while your religious liberty causes its laws to be respected, without any exception.

"It is true our faith imposes the most severe mortifications on those who have embraced the monastic life: this state, voluntarily chosen, is a mysterious union between man and the divinity; but in Italy the religion of the people is an habi-

tual source of delightful and affecting emotions. Love, hope, and faith, are enjoined as the principal duties of this religion; and the performance of these duties constitutes happiness. Far then from our priests interdicting the pure sentiment of joy, they inculcate that this sentiment expresses our gratitude towards the Creator for the benefits which he has conferred on us. What they require of us consists in the observation of practices proving our respect for the public ordinances of our religion, and our desire of pleasing God; in charity toward the unfortunate, and repentance for our sins. But they never refuse us absolution when we zealously solicit it; and the attachments of the heart inspire here an indulgent piety more than in other countries. Has not Jesus Christ said of Mary Magdalen, *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.* These words were uttered under a sky as heavenly as our own; the same sky implores in our behalf the compassion of

the Divinity." "Corinna," replied Lord Nelvil, "how shall I combat language so soothing, and of which my heart stands so much in need! But as it is not a transient passion I feel for Corinna, and as I anticipate in perspective the exquisite delight of leading with her a life of happiness and virtue, I consider it a paramount duty to attempt it. The most pure and exalted religion is, in my opinion, that which pays a constant homage to the Supreme Being by the sacrifice of our passions, and the performance of our duties. The morality of man consists in his duty towards God. Nothing can be more derogatory to the idea which we ought to entertain of the Creator than to suppose he can have any other will, in relation to man, but his intellectual improvement. Fatherly care, this noble image of a good and sovereign master, requires nothing from his children but what will render them better or more happy: how then imagine that Deity can exact from man

any thing that has not the good of man for its object? Into what inconsistence and confusion would we be led in practice, by attaching more importance to religious ceremonies than to moral duties; it is at the conclusion of the holy week that the greatest number of murders are committed in Rome. The people suppose, so to speak, that by fasting in Lent, they may afterwards commit assassination, and every crime, with impunity. Criminals are to be seen who have imbued, without remorse, their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures, who nevertheless scruple to partake of the feast of Good Friday; and the most degraded minds, when once persuaded that the greatest of crimes consists in disobeying the practices enjoined by the church, satisfy their consciences on this point, and consider the Deity as resembling the governors of the world, who regard submission to their authority as the greatest of virtues: these are the relations of the courtier substituted for

the respect inspired by the Creator, as the source and recompence of a virtuous and moral life. Italian catholicism consists in external demonstrations, and dispenses with the calm and collected feelings of the soul. When the spectacle terminates the emotion ceases, the duty is fulfilled, and the mind does not, as with us, remain for a long time afterwards absorbed in thoughts and sentiments which lead to a rigorous examination of the heart and conduct."

"You are severe, my dear Oswald," replied Corinna; "and it is not the first time that I have remarked it. If religion consists only in the strict observance of morals, what is it more than philosophy and reason? And what sentiments of piety can be generated in the mind whose principal object is to stifle the sentiments of the heart? The Stoics knew as much as ourselves respecting the duties and austerity of moral conduct; but we owe to

Christianity alone that religious enthusiasm which unites itself to all the affections of the soul, that capability of loving and feeling, that sentiment of charity and indulgence which favours so much our flight towards heaven! To what purpose the parable of the prodigal son? if it be not to teach us that love, sincere love, is more acceptable to the Deity than the most exact performance of moral duties. The son had deserted his father's house; he had plunged into all the dissipations of the world, while his father lived in all the regularity of domestic life; but he returned, he wept, he loved, and the rejoiced parent made a feast for his return. Ah! doubtless, in the mysteries of our nature, love, love is that which remains to us of our celestial inheritance. Even our virtues are too much complicated with life for us always to comprehend what is good, and what are the secret motives that direct our conduct.

"I request of my God to teach me to adore him, and I perceive the effect of my prayers by the tears which I shed. But in order to support this disposition, religious ceremonies are more necessary than might be supposed: they maintain a constant relation with the Divinity; they are daily actions without any relation to the interests of life, and only directed towards the invisible world. External objects likewise afford a powerful assistance to piety; the soul would shrink into itself if the fine arts, magnificent monuments, harmonious music, did not animate the poetic feelings of the soul, which are the feelings most congenial to religion.

Man, the most unenlightened, when praying, suffering, and hoping in heaven, this man, in such a moment, feels something within himself which he would express, like Milton, Homer, or Tasso, if education had enabled him to cloath his thoughts in words.

"There exist two distinct classes of men on the earth; those who feel the influence of enthusiasm, and those who despise it. All other differences are produced by social institutions. The former cannot find words to express his sentiments; the latter acquires words, in order to conceal the void in his heart. But even the spring which flows from the rock at the voice of heaven; this source is talent, religion, love.

"The pomp of our worship, its pictures, or kneeling saints, are emblematical of continual prayer; its statues placed on the tombs, as if one day to awaken with the dead; its churches and immense vaults, all have an intimate relation with religious ideas. I delight in this brilliant homage rendered by men to what can neither promote their fortune nor power, and which can neither punish nor recompense, but by a sentiment of the heart. I perceive within myself more animation, more life;

I recognise in man something of disinterestedness, and if we multiply too much religious grandeur and magnificence, I dwell with pleasure on this prodigality of terrestrial riches dedicated to another life; of the cares of time for eternity; sufficient attention is bestowed on the present life, sufficient time is occupied with the economy of human affairs! Ah! how I love this useless profusion; useless, if existence consist of nothing but painful exertions to secure a miserable gain. But if this world be our road towards heaven, there is nothing better or more profitable than to elevate the soul to the infinite, invisible, and eternal Being, in the midst of the multitude of creatures which surround him.

"Jesus Christ allowed a weak, and perhaps a repentant woman, to anoint his feet with the most precious perfumes; he reproved those who wished they had been appropriated to a more useful purpose:

Let her alone, me ye have not always with you! Alas! all that is valuable or sublime on earth only remains with us for a short time! Age, infirmities, death, too soon deprive us of this drop of dew which falls from heaven, and suffers us not to repose on a bed of flowers. Dear Oswald, allow us then to mingle together love, religion, genius, the beauties of nature, music, and poetry; it is atheism alone that is cold, egotistical, and base. Jesus Christ has said, "*when two or three are met in my name, I will be in the midst of them.*" And what is it, O my God! to be assembled in thy name, if it is not to enjoy the sublime gifts of your beneficent nature, to render you homage, to thank you for the existence you have bestowed, and more especially to thank you, when a heart created by you responds in unison with our own."

A divine inspiration animated at this moment the features of Corinna; Oswald

could scarcely restrain himself from falling on his knees before her, in the midst of the temple, and remained silent for a long time, wholly absorbed in the pleasure recalled by her words, and by finding himself still an object of her regard. At last, however, he wished to reply; he was unwilling to abandon a cause so near to his heart. "Corinna," said he, "permit me to address a few words to your love. My soul is not destitute of feeling; no, Corinna does not believe it; and if I love austerity in principle and practice, it is because that it imparts to sentiment more keenness and duration. If I prefer reason in religion, that is, if I reprobate contradictory dogmas, and human means of making an impression on men, it is because I see the divinity in reason, as well as in enthusiasm; and if I am unwilling that any of the faculties of man should be enfeebled, it is because they are all equally necessary to ascertain a truth which reflection has revealed, as well as the in-

stinct of the heart, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul. What can we add to these sublime ideas, and to their union with virtue? What can we add that would not fall far beneath them? Poetic enthusiasm, which gives to you so many charms, is not, I dare to affirm, the most salutary devotion. How would this prepare you for the numerous sacrifices which duty requires? Before the mind of man was enlightened by revelation, when our present and future fate was only darkly perceived through the clouds that surrounded us, we had no better guide; but for us to whom Christianity has rendered our duty clear and positive, this sentiment ought not only to be our recompence but our sole guide; you describe the existence of the blessed in heaven, and not mortals on this earth. The religious life is a combat, not a state of enjoyment. If we were not condemned to struggle in this world against the vices of others as well as our own, there would in fact be

no distinction between cold and exalted souls. But man is a being more violent, and more obstinate than your heart can conceive; and reason in piety, and authority in duty, are necessary curbs to the wanderings of his pride.

"In whatever light we view the multiplied ceremonies, and external pomp of your religion, believe me, dear friend, the contemplation of the universe and its author will always be the most acceptable worship, that which will best occupy the imagination, since upon examination nothing can be discovered in it either futile or absurd. The tenets which wound my reason also cool my enthusiasm. Doubtless the world, such as it is, is a mystery we can neither deny nor comprehend; it would nevertheless be foolish to refuse believing what we could not explain; but what is contradictory has always been so since the creation of man. Revelation, such as God as bestowed upon us, is supe-

rior to the light of the understanding, but not in opposition to it. A German philosopher has said: *I know only two beautiful things in the universe, the starry heaven above our heads, and the sentiment of duty in our hearts.* In effect, all the wonders of creation are comprised in these words.

"Far from a simple and severe religion hardening the heart, I should have thought, before knowing you Corinna, that it alone could concentrate and perpetuate the affections. I have frequently witnessed an indelible attachment combined with the most pure and austere morality; I have frequently witnessed in old age a purity of soul, which neither the tumults of the passions, nor the allurements of life could make to swerve from its purpose. Doubtless repentance is a good thing, and I have need more than any one to believe in its efficacy; but repentance often repeated renders the feel-

ings callous; this sentiment can only once be said to regenerate the mind. It is by redemption alone that such a change can be accomplished in the soul, and this great sacrifice cannot be renewed. When human weakness is accustomed to it the mind becomes debilitated, and loses the capability of loving with constancy.

"I would make objections of the same kind to that worship full of splendour, which, according to you, operates so powerfully upon the imagination; I believe the imagination to be modest and retired as the heart. The emotions which over-rule it are less powerful than those which spring from it. I have seen in the Cevennes a Protestant minister, who preached towards evening at the bottom of the mountains. He invoked the tombs of the French, proscribed and banished by their brethren, and whose ashes had been here deposited. He promised to their friends that they should meet again in a

better world. He said a virtuous life would insure this happiness; he said, "*do good to men, that God may heal in your heart the wounds of sorrow.*" He was astonished at the inflexibility and cruelty of man, the creature of a day, towards his fellow men; and descanted on the terrible idea of death, which the living have conceived but cannot extinguish. In short, he spoke nothing but what was affecting and true: his words were perfectly in union with nature. The torrent that was heard in the distance, the scintillation of the stars, seemed to express the same idea under another form. There the magnificence of nature was displayed, that magnificence which can be equally enjoyed by all, and that striking simplicity which affects the soul much more profoundly than the most splendid ceremonies."

On the day succeeding this conversation, the day of the passover, Corinna and Lord Nelvil were together in the square

of St. Peter, at the moment when the pope advances upon the most elevated balcony of the church, and solicits from heaven the blessing he is about to bestow on the earth, when he pronounces these words: —'To the city and the world (*urbi et orbi*)'—the assembled people throw themselves upon their knees, and Corinna and Lord Nelvil felt, by the emotion they experienced, that every species of worship is alike. Religious sentiment unites men with each other, when self-love and fanaticism do not make it an object of jealousy and hatred. To pray together in whatever language, and according to whatever ritual it may be, is the most affecting bond of hope and sympathy that man can contract upon earth.

CHAPTER VI.

THE day of the passover was now over, and still Corinna spoke not of fulfilling her promise, by entrusting Lord Nelvil with her history. Mortified at this silence, he said one day to her, that the beauties of Naples were much extolled, and that he had a wish to visit them. Corinna instantly penetrating what passed in his mind, proposed to accompany him. She flattered herself with being able to recall the consent he had exacted from her, in giving him a proof of her affection which ought to satisfy him. And she also thought, that if he allowed her to accompany him, it was doubtless because he intended to consecrate his life to her. She waited his reply with much an-

xiety, and her almost suppliant looks seemed to solicit a favourable answer. Oswald could not resist them; he had at first been surprised at this offer, and the simplicity with which Corinna made it, he hesitated for some time to accept it: but on perceiving her agitation, and her eyes filled with tears, he consented to set out with her, without considering the importance of such a resolution. Corinna was overwhelmed with joy: for her heart gave itself wholly up at this moment to her affection for Oswald.

The day was appointed, and the pleasing prospect of travelling together made all other ideas disappear from their mind. They amused themselves with giving orders for their journey, and there was not one of these orders which proved not a source of pleasure. Happy disposition of the mind where all the arrangements of life have a peculiar charm, by connecting them with some hope of the heart!

Too soon will the moment arrive when existence becomes a burthen, and when the morning of each day requires an exertion of fortitude to enable us to reach its close.

At the moment when Lord Nelvil had left Corinna, in order to prepare every thing for their departure, Count d'Erfeuil entered, and learned from her the project they had formed of travelling together. "Have you thought of it?" said he to her, "What! travel with Lord Nelvil without his being your husband, without his having engaged to become so? What would become of you were he to forsake you?" —"What I would become," answered Corinna, "in all other situations of life, if he ceased to love me, the most unfortunate woman in the world." "Yes, but if you have not compromised your reputation you may remain wholly free." "I wholly free!" cried Corinna, "when the most profound sentiment of my life would

be destroyed! when my heart would be broken!" "The public would not know it, and you by dissembling lose nothing in its opinion." "And why preserve this opinion," answered Corinna, "if it is not to have a greater charm in the eyes of those we love?"—"We may cease to love," replied the Count, "but we can never cease living in the midst of society, and to be dependent on it." "Alas!" answered Corinna, "could I think that the period would arrive when the affection of Oswald would not be every thing to me in the world, could I think it I would have already ceased to love him. What sort of love is that which foresees, which calculates the moment when it will no longer exist? If there be any thing religious in this sentiment, it is because all other interests disappear before its delights, like devotion in the complete sacrifice of itself."—"What is it you say?" replied the Count, "how can a person of your talents fill your head with such follies? It would

be to our advantage that all the fair sex should think like you, we should then have a much greater ascendancy over them; but your superiority must not be yielded up; it must be employed to some purpose." "Employed," said Corinna; "Ah! I owe it much if it enables me to feel all that is affecting and generous in the character of Lord Nelvil."

"Lord Nelvil is like other men," replied the Count; "he will return to his native country, he will pursue his career, he will become reasonable in the end; yet you would imprudently expose your reputation by accompanying him to Naples."

"I am ignorant of Lord Nelvil's intentions," said Corinna, "and perhaps it would have been better had I reflected before loving him; but now of what consequence is one sacrifice more; does not my life always depend upon his affection?

I find on the contrary some pleasure in having no other resource; it is ever thus when the heart is deeply affected; nevertheless the world may sometimes believe that it remains with you, and I love to think under this belief my misery would be complete, if Lord Nelvil separated himself from me." "And does he know to what a degree you have sacrificed your reputation for him?" continued Count d'Erfeuil. "I have taken great care to conceal it from him," replied Corinna; "and as he is not well acquainted with the customs of this country, I have a little exaggerated the liberty it allows. I require your promise not to say a word to him on this subject. I wish him to be free, to be always free in his connection with me; he cannot constitute my happiness by any kind of sacrifice. The sentiment which constitutes my happiness is the sweetener of life, and neither kindness nor delicacy could reanimate it were it once destroyed! I conjure you

then, my dear Count, not to trouble yourself concerning my fate; nothing that you understand respecting the affections of the heart is applicable to me; what you say is very prudent, very rational, and well adapted to common minds; but you would do me great injustice by judging of my character by the maxims of common life. I suffer, I enjoy, I have my peculiar feelings, and these feelings must be observed by those who take an interest in my happiness."

The self-love of the Count d'Erfeuil was a little wounded by the rejection of his advice, and by the great proof of affection Corinna indicated for Lord Nelvil; he knew well that he was not beloved by her; he knew also that Oswald was; but it was disagreeable to him that it should have been so publicly shewn. There is always something in the intimacy of a man and a female which displeases even the best friends of that man. "I see

that I have no influence over you," said d'Erfeuil; "but when you become unfortunate you will then remember me; in the mean time I will leave Rome. It would be impossible to remain in it after your departure; I shall certainly see you both again in Scotland or in Italy, for I have acquired a great taste for travelling. Pardon my advice, charming Corinna, and believe me ever ready to serve you."

Corinna thanked him, and saw him depart with a sentiment of regret. She had become acquainted with him at the same period as with Oswald, and that remembrance formed between them ties she wished not to see broken. She conducted herself as she had said to the Count she would. Some uneasiness for a moment disturbed the joy with which Lord Nelvil had accepted the proposal of the journey; he feared the departure for Naples might injure the reputation of Corinna, and wished to obtain her secret before set-

ting off, in order to know with certainty if they were not separated by some insuperable obstacle; but she declared to him that she would only explain herself at Naples, and her manner imparted to his mind a sweet illusion respecting what she had to communicate. Oswald delivered himself up to this illusion; love in an uncertain and feeble character partly deceived him, while his reason whispered the truth; and it is present feeling which determines which of the two shall be heard. The mind of Lord Nelvil was remarkable, and enlarged, and penetrating; but he only judged accurately in respect to past events. His present feelings always presented objects to his mind in a confused point of view. Susceptible at once of remorse, passion, and timidity, these contrarieties in his character never permitted him to know himself, till events had decided the struggle which agitated his mind.

When the friends of Corinna, and particularly Prince Castel-Forte, heard of her intended journey, they experienced much vexation. The Prince was so much hurt by her departure, that he resolved to join her in a short time. He certainly did not display much vanity in following in the train of a favoured lover; but he could not support the painful void left in his heart by the absence of his friend; he had no other so dear to him as Corinna, and never did he enter any other house but her own. The society she had collected round her would be dispersed, and it would be impossible to re-assemble them in her absence. Prince Castel-Forte did not possess domestic habits; of a lively disposition, study fatigued him, and the day appeared an insupportable weight, if he could not repair in the evening to the house of Corinna; he knew after her departure it would become more so, and he secretly resolved to follow her as a disinterested friend, who is always present to

console us in our misfortunes; but this friend ought to be certain that such a period has arrived.

Corinna experienced a sentiment of melancholy, in thus relinquishing all her habits; she had lived in Rome for some years in a manner very agreeable to her; she was a center round which was collected artists, celebrated and enlightened men, possessing complete independence in their manner of thinking and acting, which imparted a charm to her existence; what was she now about to become?

If she was destined to the happiness of having Oswald for a husband, it was to England he would conduct her, and in what manner would she there be judged of? How would she be able to accommodate herself to a mode of life so different from that she had led for six years? But these reflections only now and then passed through her mind, and her affection for

Oswald soon obliterated them. She beheld him, she listened to him, and never counted the hours but by his absence or presence. Who disputes with happiness? Who does not receive it when it comes? Corinna had very little foresight; neither fear nor hope entered into her consideration; her faith in the future was confused; and her imagination in this case operated neither to injure or befriend her.

On the morning of her departure Prince Castel-Forte entered, and with tears in his eyes said to her: "Will you never again return to Rome?" "Oh heavens! yes," replied she; "we shall return in a month." "But if you marry Lord Nelvil, you must abandon Italy," said the Prince. "Abandon Italy!" said Corinna, and she sighed. "That country," continued the Prince, "where they speak your language, where you are so well understood, where you are so much admired; and your friends, Corinna, and your

friends! Where will you be beloved as you are here? Where will you find the poetry and the fine arts you so much admire? Is there then but one sentiment that constitutes life? Is it not on an identity of language, customs, and manners, that the attachment to our country depends, and which tends to produce that longing for home, that affection so frequently occurring to individuals long estranged from their natal soil?" "Alas! what you say," cried Corinna, "have I not experienced it! Is it not that grief which has decided my fate?" She sorrowfully regarded her chamber and the statues with which it was adorned, then the Tiber which flowed beneath her windows, and the heavens, whose beauty seemed to invite to repose. But at that moment Oswald passed on horseback across the bridge of St. Angelo, he came with the rapidity of lightning. "There he is!" cried Corinna. Scarcely had she uttered these words when he arrived; she ran up to him; both impatient

to set out, hastened to ascend the carriage. Corinna nevertheless bade a kind adieu to the Prince Castel-Forte, but her words were drowned by the noise of the postillions, the neighing of the horses, and the bustle of their departure, and pursued her journey sometimes sad, sometimes gay, according as she was inspired by hopes or fears respecting her future destiny.

BOOK XI.

CHAPTER I.

NAPLES, AND THE HERMITAGE OF ST. SALVADOR.

OSWALD felt all the pride of triumph in carrying off his conquest. He whose enjoyments had hitherto been almost constantly disturbed by the intrusion of reflections and regrets, experienced upon this occasion a total exemption from the pains of suspence. Not that he was altogether resolved, but that he was wholly unconcerned, abandoning himself to the course of events, in the confident expectation that they would ultimately conduct him to the object of his wishes. They traversed the plain of Albano, where is still exhibited the supposed tomb of the

Horatii and Curiatii. They passed near to the lake of Nemi, and the sacred groves which surround it. Here it was, according to fabulous tradition, that Hippolytus was resuscitated by Diana, who would not suffer any horses to approach the spot, and by this prohibition perpetuated the remembrance of the misfortune of her juvenile favourite. Thus it is, at every step one travels in Italy, the impressions of history and poetry are retraced in the memory, and the charming situations by which they are recalled soften down all that is melancholy in the past, and seem to embalm them in eternal youth.

Oswald and Corinna then traversed the Pontine Marshes, a tract fertile but pestilential; and where, notwithstanding the productiveness of nature, not a single habitation is to be seen. A few sickly beings harness your horses, and advise you not to sleep in passing the marshes, for there sleep proves the real harbinger of death.

Buffaloes, of an appearance at once wretched and ferocious, drag the plough, which a few imprudent cultivators still, occasionally, conduct over that fatal soil, and the most brilliant sun illuminates this melancholy spectacle. In the North, marshy and unhealthy situations are distinctly pointed out by their frightful aspect; but in the most fatal regions of the South, nature retains a serenity, whose deceitful softness throws the traveller off his guard. If it be true, that it is extremely dangerous to fall asleep in crossing the Pontine Marshes, the invincible somnolency which they induce in warm weather must be considered as one of the perfidious impressions which this place occasions. Lord Nelvil constantly kept a watchful eye upon Corinna, who sometimes reclined her head upon Theresina, who accompanied them; and at others, overcome by the languor of the atmosphere, closed her eyes. Oswald instantly awoke her with inexpressible terror; and

though naturally disposed to taciturnity, was inexhaustible in subjects of conversation, always well supported and always new, in order to prevent her from yielding for a single moment to the fatal lethargy. Ah! should not female sensibility be forgiven those heart-rending regrets which are attached to the days when they were beloved, when their existence was so necessary to that of another, and when they constantly found themselves supported and protected! How dreary the solitude which succeeds those periods of bliss! and how happy they whom the sacred ties of matrimony have softly conducted from love to friendship, without experiencing the torture of one cruel moment!

Oswald and Corinna, after their anxious journey through the Marshes, at length arrived at Terracina, which is situated on the coast, and on the confines of the kingdom of Naples. There the *South* may be

truly said to commence; it is there that she receives the traveller in all her magnificence. That country of Naples, that *happy plain*,* is, in a manner, separated from the rest of Europe, both by the sea, which nearly surrounds it, and the dangerous tract which must be traversed before it can be reached. It might be said that nature, desirous of retaining within herself the secret of this delicious abode, had rendered all its approaches perilous. At Rome one has not yet reached *the South*; there, indeed, one has a fore-taste of its attractions; but the full force of its enchantment commences only with the Neapolitan territory. At a short distance from Terracina is the promontory assigned by the poets as the abode of Circe; and behind Terracina rises Mount Anxur, where Theodoric, King of the Goths,

* Alluding to the etymology of *Campania*, and the epithet *Felix*, bestowed on it by the Romans.---E.

erected one of those strong castles, with which the warriors of the North covered the face of the globe. In Italy there are very few traces of the invasion of the Barbarians; or, at least, where those traces consist of ruins, they are confounded with the effects of time. The northern nations have not given to Italy that warlike aspect which Germany has preserved. It should seem as if the tender soil of Ausonia was incapable of retaining the fortifications and citadels with which the regions of the North are covered. There a Gothic edifice, a feudal castle, rarely presents itself to view; and the memorials of the ancient Romans rise triumphant, amidst the lapse of ages, over those of the nations who subdued them.

The mountain which overhangs Terracina is entirely covered with orange and citron trees, which embalm the atmosphere in the most delicious manner. Nothing in our climates can be compared with the

meridional perfume of the citron tree in any open situation. It has almost the same effect as melodious music on the imagination; it inspires a poetic disposition, calls forth talent, and intoxicates it with the charms of nature. The aloes and broad-leaved fig trees, incessantly to be met with, have a peculiar physiognomy, reminding one of the well-known qualities of the redoubtable productions of Africa. These plants inspire a kind of horror; they have the appearance of belonging to a violent and tyrannical nature. The whole aspect of the country seems strange. One feels as if in another world, known to us only by the descriptions of the poets of antiquity, whose pictures display, at the same time, so much imagination and so much exactness. On entering Terracina the children threw into Corinna's carriage an immense quantity of flowers, which they culled by the roadside, or on the mountain, and which they scattered at random: such was their con-

fidence in the prodigality of nature! The carts, which conveyed the productions of harvest, were daily decorated with garlands of roses; and sometimes the children crown their petty gleanings with flowers; for, under a fine sky, the imagination of the very populace becomes poetic. By the side of these smiling scenes was seen and heard the sea, whose surges broke with a furious surf. It was not a storm which agitated it, but those rocks that formed an habitual obstacle to its waves, and provoked its majestic rage.

E non udite ancor come risuona
Il roco ed alto fremito marino?

"And still hear ye not resound the deep and hollow murmur of the sea?"

This movement without purpose, this force without object, which is eternally renovated, without our being able to ascertain the cause or end, draws us to the shore where this grand spectacle presents

itself to our view, and we feel a kind of irresistible impulse, mixed with terror, to approximate the waves, and overwhelm reflection with their tumultuous noise.

Towards the evening all was calm. Corinna and Lord Nelvil took a slow and delicious walk in the fields. The pressure of every step made the flowers give out their perfumes. The nightingales more gladly took their station on the rose-bushes, and thus the purest strains of song were blended with the sweetest odours, and all the charms of nature exerted a reciprocal attraction. But what is particularly and ineffably delightful, is the mildness of the atmosphere which you respire. In surveying a fine situation in the North, the climate which you feel continually gives some interruption to the pleasure which you might otherwise enjoy. Those petty sensations of cold and humidity, which more or less distract the attention from the object you are contemplating,

have the same effect as a false note in a concert. But in approaching Naples you feel yourself so completely at your ease, you find nature so very much your friend, that there is nothing to impair the agreeable sensations which she excites. In our climate man has no relation but with society. In warm countries nature places him in a state of relation with external objects, and his sensations softly expand themselves beyond his species. Not that the South has not also its melancholy; for where is human destiny exempt from that impression! but in this melancholy there is no tincture of discontent, anxiety, or regret. Elsewhere it is life, which, such as it is, proves insufficient to gratify the faculties of the mind: here it is the faculties of the mind, which are insufficient for the complete enjoyment of it, and the superabundance of our sensations inspires a musing indolence, which, while we feel it, scarcely wakes our attention.

During the night the fire-flies made their appearance in the atmosphere. One would have thought that the mountain sparkled, and that the burning soil emitted some of its flames. These insects flew about among the trees, and occasionally lighted on their foliage. The wind put these little stars in motion, and varied their twinkling lights in a thousand forms. The sand also contained a great number of small ferruginous pebbles, which sparkled in every direction. It was the native territory of fire, which still retained in its bosom the impressions of that sun whose last rays had just imparted their warmth. Here nature presents us, at once, with an activity and repose which completely satisfy the varied purposes of existence.

Corinna was completely engrossed with the charms of this evening walk; her whole frame was enraptured. Oswald could not conceal his emotion. Repeatedly did he press Corinna to his bosom.

As often did he retire, then return, then recede again, impelled by respect to her who was to be his companion for life. Corinna never once thought of those dangers which might have alarmed her; for such was her esteem for Oswald, that had he requested the entire surrender of her existence, she could not but regard the entreaty as the solemn affiance of her nuptials. But she felt happy in his triumph over himself, and the honour which he paid to her by the sacrifice; and her soul overflowed with an excess of benevolence and love, which prevented her from carrying her desires any further. Oswald was very far from this state of tranquillity; he felt himself inflamed by the charms of Corinna. Once he flung himself prostrate at her feet, and seemed to have wholly resigned the empire of his passions. But Corinna regarded him with so much softness and dread, she seemed so amply to recognise his power, by entreating him

not to abuse it, that this humble defence was more effectual than any other consideration, in inspiring him with respect.

At this moment they perceived in the water the reflection of a torch, which an unknown person was carrying along the shore, on his way, by stealth, to a neighbouring habitation. "He is going to visit the object of his affections," said Oswald. "Yes," replied Corinna. "And as to me," resumed Oswald, "the happiness of this day draws to a close." Corinna's eyes, which were at that instant fixed upon heaven, were suddenly filled with tears. Oswald fearing he had offended her, prostrated himself before her to obtain forgiveness for this transport of his love. "No," said Corinna, stretching forth her hand, and inviting him to return along with her;—"No, Oswald, I am certain you will respect her whom you

love. You know a single word from you would be all-powerful. You are therefore my guarantee. It is you who would for ever refuse me for a spouse if you rendered me unworthy of that honour."— "But then," replied Oswald, "since you are conscious of the cruel empire of your wishes over my heart, what, Corinna, can be the cause of your present pensiveness?" "Alas!" rejoined she, "I felt the short interval which I have just passed with you as the happiest of my life; and as I lifted up my eyes in gratitude towards heaven, I know not how, but a superstitious fancy of my youthful days suddenly revived in my bosom. The moon, as I gazed on it, was overshadowed with a cloud, and the aspect of the cloud was inauspicious. I have always found that the heavens possessed a real physiognomy, sometimes paternal, and sometimes fraught with displeasure; and I repeat it, Oswald, this evening they frown upon our love."——

"Dearest girl," replied Lord Nelvil, "the sole auguries of the life of man are his good or bad actions; and have I not this very evening sacrificed my most ardent desires to a sentiment of virtue?" "Well, so much the better, if this presage does not apply to you," rejoined Corinna; "the lowering aspect of the heavens may, indeed, confine its threats to myself."——

CHAPTER II.

THEY arrived at Naples in the day-time, and found themselves in the midst of that immense population, which is, at the same time, so animated and so indolent. They first passed through the streets of Toledo, where they saw the Lazzaroni lying on the pavement, or retired to their panniers of osiers, which served them for an habitation by day and by night. This savage condition, which is here seen blended with civilization, has something in it peculiarly original. There are among these people some who do not know their own names, and go to the confessor to acknowledge anonymous sins, being incapable of telling him the name of the transgressor. There is a subterraneous grotto

at Naples where thousands of Lazzaroni pass their lives; sallying out only at noon to have a peep at the sun, and sleeping away the rest of the day, whilst their wives are employed in spinning. In a climate where clothing and subsistence are so easily procured, a very independent and active government would be requisite, in order to impress the mass of the people with a sufficient spirit of emulation; for at Naples the primary articles of subsistence are obtained with so much facility, that they may dispense with the kind of industry necessary in other countries to gain a livelihood. Laziness and ignorance, combined with the volcanic atmosphere which they here inhale, might be supposed to engender ferocity, when the passions are excited; but the people of this country are not more vicious than those of any other. They have an imagination which might form the basis of disinterested actions; and with this imagination they might be conducted to prospe-

rity, had they the advantage of good religious and political institutions.

One meets with numbers of Calabrians travelling in bands, with a fiddler in the van, in quest of agricultural employment, and occasionally amusing themselves with a dance, by way of recreation from the fatigues of their journey. Near Naples there is a yearly festival held in honour of *Our Lady of the Grotto,* upon which occasion the young girls dance to the music of the tamborine and castanets; and it not unfrequently happens that they introduce an article into their marriage contracts, binding their husbands to escort them annually to this festival. On the Neapolitan stage there is a performer, about eighty years old, who has, for threescore years, diverted the Neapolitans in their national comic character of Punchinello. Can we imagine what importance is attached to the immortality of the soul by a man who thus fills up the measure of a long life? The

only idea which the people of Naples have of happiness is pleasure; but even the love of pleasure is far preferable to a barren egotism.

It must be admitted, that of all the inhabitants of the globe they are the fondest of money. If you ask one of the rabble in the streets to shew you the way, he instantly holds out his hand, after directing you by a sign, for they are more sparing of their words than their gesticulations. But their desire for money is not regulated by any principle of method or discretion; they spend it the moment they have received it. Were money introduced among savages, they would ask for it in the same manner. What this nation is principally deficient in, is a sentiment of dignity. They perform generous and benevolent actions rather from an instinctive goodness of heart than from principle; for their theories of every kind are absurd, and opinion in this coun-

try has no force. But when persons of either sex rise superior to this moral anarchy, their conduct is more remarkable in itself, and more worthy of admiration than it would be in other situations, since there is nothing in the external circumstances propitious to virtue. She finds no impulse but in their own bosoms. There is neither reward nor punishment in the system of laws or manners. The man of virtue is here a more heroic character, as his virtue neither adds to his wisdom or refinement.

With some few honourable exceptions, the higher classes bear a close resemblance to those already described. The minds of the one are little better cultivated than those of the other, and the modes of the fashionable world form the only difference in their exterior appearance. But amidst this mass of ignorance there may be discovered so extensive a fund of natural talent and general docility, that it would be difficult to predict what might be made of

such a nation, were the whole energy of government exerted in conducting them in the paths of knowledge and morality. Besides the most conspicuous characters of this country, the Abbé Galiani, Caraccioli, &c. possessed, it is said, in the highest degree the talents of pleasantry and reflection; these rare powers of the understanding, that combination without which pedantry or frivolity prevents one from even acquiring a correct habit of thinking.

The Neapolitan people are, in some points, totally uncivilized; but their vulgarity does not resemble that of other nations. Its very grossness strikes the imagination. It makes you almost fancy yourself already landed on the opposite African shores; there is somewhat *Numidian* in the savage cries which you hear in every direction. Those tanned visages, those garbs formed out of patches of red or violet stuffs, the deep colour of which has a striking effect; those shreds of dra-

pery which are nevertheless arranged, with considerable taste, give a somewhat picturesque appearance to the populace, whilst in other respects they display only the miseries incident to civilization. A certain degree of taste for dress and decoration is frequently conjoined at Naples, with the total privation of the necessaries and conveniences of life. The shops are agreeably ornamented with flowers and fruits. Some of them have a holiday air, originating not in abundance or public prosperity, but solely in the vivacity of the imagination. To gratify the eye is their primary object. The mildness of the climate permits artizans of all descriptions to work at their business in the streets. There the tailors are employed in the various articles of dress; there the cooks set out their repasts; and the occupations of the house thus transferred to other streets multiply the movements of the scene a thousand-fold. The song, the dance, and noisy diversions are tolerably well suited to this spectacle; and

there is no country where one more distinctly remarks the difference between amusement and happiness. Having at length emerged from the interior of the city, you arrive at the quays, where you have a view of the sea and Vesuvius, and forget all that you have learned relative to the race of man.

Oswald and Corinna arrived at Naples whilst Vesuvius was in a state of eruption. During the day there appeared only a black volume of smoke, which could not easily be distinguished from the clouds; but in the evening, on ascending to the balcony of their residence, they felt an emotion wholly unforeseen. This river of fire descends to the sea, and its waves like those of the latter manifest the rapid and continual succession of an indefatigable movement. It should seem as if nature, even in transforming herself into different elements, still retained some traces of a primary unity of design. This phenomenon of Mount Vesuvius causes an ac-

tual palpitation of the heart. We are in general so familiarized with external objects, that we scarcely perceive their existence; and amidst our *prosaic* countries, they very rarely excite a new emotion. But the astonishment which the contemplation of the universe is calculated to produce, is suddenly called forth at the sight of an unknown prodigy of creation. Our whole frame is agitated by that energy of nature, from which the various combinations of society had long diverted our regards. We feel that the greatest mysteries of existence do not wholly centre in man, and that there is a power independent of him, which menaces or protects him, under the controul of laws which he is unable to penetrate. Oswald and Corinna agreed to ascend Vesuvius; and whatsoever there might be of peril in this excursion, gave but an additional charm to a project which they were to execute in concert.

CHAPTER III.

THERE chanced to be at this period, in the harbour of Naples, an English man of war, on board of which religious service was performed every Sunday. The captain and the English inhabitants at Naples proposed to Lord Nelvil to visit the vessel the following day. He accepted the invitation, without thinking at the moment whether Corinna should accompany him, and in what manner he should present her to his countrymen. This was a source of tormenting anxiety to him during the whole of the ensuing night. As he was next morning taking a walk near the harbour with Corinna, and was on the point of dissuading her from going on board, they saw just arriving at the beach an English pinnace, rowed by ten seamen

dressed in white, and having their heads covered with a cap of black velvet, decorated with a leopard in silver embroidery. A young officer sprung on shore, and saluting Corinna by the name of Lady Nelvil, begged her to step into the boat, in order to be conveyed to the ship. At the name of Lady Nelvil, Corinna felt considerable agitation, blushed, and fixed her eyes on the ground. Oswald seemed for a moment to hesitate; then suddenly seizing her hand, said, "Come, my dear, and she instantly followed."

The sound of the waves, and the silence of the seamen, who made not a single motion, nor spoke one word, without an object, and who rapidly conducted the boat through that element which they had so often traversed, inspired a propensity to reverie. Besides, Corinna had not courage to put a question to Lord Nelvil as to what had just passed. She anxiously laboured to divine his project, never sup-

posing (what, however, is generally the most probable) that he had no settled plan, but yielded to each new circumstance that occurred. At one time she conceived he was conducting her on board to attend divine service, for the purpose of there celebrating her nuptials; and at the moment this idea was rather a source of terror than of happiness. She thought she was leaving Italy and on her return to England, where she had already suffered so much. The severity of the manners and habits of that country recurred to her thoughts, and love itself could not wholly triumph over the anxiety occasioned by these recollections. Yet, under a change of circumstances, what astonishment would she have felt at these surmises, however fugitive! how would she have abjured them!

Corinna ascended the vessel, the interior of which was disposed with the utmost neatness, and kept fastidiously clean.

Nothing was heard but the voice of the captain, which was prolonged and repeated from one deck to the other through the medium of command and obedience. The subordination, the serious air, the regularity and silence which were observable on board this vessel presented the picture of a free, but strictly regulated social order, in contrast with that of the city of Naples, where all was vivacity, passion, and tumult. Oswald's thoughts were occupied with Corinna, and the impressions which she received; yet they were occasionally called off from her by the pleasure he felt in finding himself, as it were, in his native country; and indeed, may not a vessel afloat well pass for the birth-place of an Englishman? Oswald walked the decks with some of the Englishmen, inquiring after their news from England, and talking about politics and his country. Corinna was, in the mean time, engaged in discourse with some English ladies, who had come from Naples

to attend divine service. They were surrounded with children, beautiful as the day, but as timid as their mothers, and not a single word was uttered in the presence of a new acquaintance. This constrained silence made Corinna melancholy. She cast her eyes towards delicious Naples and its verdant shores, thought of its animated modes of life, and heaved a sigh. Fortunately for her Oswald did not observe her; on the contrary, seeing her seated amidst the English ladies, with her dark, like their fair, eyelashes bent downward, and conforming herself in every thing to their manner, he felt the highest degree of pleasure. In vain does an Englishman endeavour, for a short interval, to reconcile himself to foreign manners; his heart continually reverts to the first impressions of his existence. If you meet an English vessel at the extremity of the globe, and enquire of those on board where they are going, their reply is, "Home, if England be their destination."

At whatever distance they may be, their thoughts and their wishes are still fixed upon their country.

The crew were summoned to hear divine service between decks, and Corinna speedily discovered that her apprehension was unfounded, and that Lord Nelvil had not entertained the solemn intention which she at first attributed to him. She then reproached herself for her fears upon this point, and felt, with renovated force, all the embarrassment of her situations; for all who were present conceived her to be the wife of Lord Nelvil, and she had not fortitude to say a single word which could refute or confirm that opinion. Oswald also experienced the most cruel sufferings; but amidst a thousand rare endowments, there was much of weakness and irresolution in his character. These are defects which are not perceptible to him who has them, because to his eyes they assume a new form with every change

of circumstances. With him it is prudence, sensibility, or delicacy, which postpone the moment of decision, and prolong a state of irresolution. Scarcely ever is he aware that it is the same character which confers on all these circumstances the same quality of inconvenience.

Corinna, notwithstanding the anxious thoughts which distracted her attention, received a profound impression from the scene which she had just witnessed. Nothing, in fact, speaks more powerfully to the heart than divine service on board a vessel; and the noble simplicity of the reformed religion seems particularly adapted to the sentiments which are felt upon this occasion. A young man performed the office of chaplain. He delivered his discourse in a tone firm but gentle, and his figure indicated the severity of a youthful purity of soul. This severity carries with it an impression of energy which peculiarly comports with the inculcation of

religious duties amidst the perils of war. At stated intervals the English minister pronounced prayers, of which the concluding words were repeated by the whole congregation. These confused but gentle mutterings, interposing from time to time, had the effect of reviving a feeling of interest and emotion. The sailors, officers, and captain, repeatedly fell on their knees, more particularly at the repetition of the words, 'Lord have mercy upon us.' The captain's sword, which lay by his side as he knelt, exhibited that dignified union of humility before God, and intrepidity towards man, which renders the devotion of warriors so affecting; and while this assembly of brave fellows were engaged in putting up their prayers to the God of Armies, the sea was discernible through the port-holes, and the gentle rippling of its waves, which were then in a state of calm, seemed to say—'Your prayers are heard.' The chaplain finished the service with a prayer which is peculiar to the Eng-

lish sailors:—" Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, &c. that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious sovereign Lord King George and his kingdoms, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our island may in peace and quietness serve thee our God, and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours, &c."

How many fine sentiments are comprised in these simple expressions! The preliminary and continued course of studies necessary to the naval service, and the austerity of a seafaring life, convert the vessel into a sort of floating military cloister, and the regular routine of the most serious occupations is broken in upon only by perils and death. The sailors, notwithstanding their warlike habits, often display considerable tenderness, and a singular compassion for women

and children when they happen to be their associates on board. These sentiments affect us more forcibly, when we reflect with what coolness they confront those terrific dangers of war and the elements, amidst which the presence of man exhibits something supernatural.

Corinna and Lord Nelvil at length seated themselves in the boat which was to convey them on their return; and they again beheld that city of Naples, which seems disposed in the form of an amphitheatre, as if intended for the more convenient enjoyment of the *fête* of nature. Corinna, as she put her foot on land, could not repress an emotion of joy. Had Lord Nelvil suspected the cause, he would perhaps have been justly offended; yet he would have been unjust towards Corinna, who passionately loved him, notwithstanding the painful impression made upon her by circumstances which reminded her of a country where so many

afflicting incidents conspired to render her life miserable. Her imagination was active, and her heart was powerfully susceptible of attachment; but talent, and more particularly in a woman, induces a disposition to languor, a propensity towards reverie, which the most violent passion cannot wholly efface. The image of a monotonous life, even in the lap of happiness, is viewed with horror by one who relishes the charms of variety. It is when there is but little wind in the sails that the vessel can safely keep her course along shore; but the imagination wanders even when sensibility proves faithful. This, at least, holds true until the moment when misfortune sweeps away all incongruities, and leaves behind but one subject of meditation, one topic of sorrow.

Oswald wholly ascribed Corinna's reverie to some remains of the embarrassment which she must have felt on hearing herself styled Lady Nelvil; and severely

reproaching himself for not having relieved her at the time, he feared that she would suspect him of a frivolous levity. In order, therefore, to attain the so much desired explanation, he began with an offer o entrust her with the history of his own life. "I shall speak first," said he, "and your confidence will follow mine."—"Most assuredly it will," replied Corinna, trembling as she spoke. "Well, you wish for it? What day? and what hour? when you shall have finished, I will tell you all."—"Why so painfully agitated!" rejoined Oswald. "How, then! will you always entertain this fear of your friend, this distrust of his heart?"—"No," replied Corinna, "it shall be done; I have the whole in writing; you shall have it to-morrow, if you choose."—"To-morrow!" said Lord Nelvil, "we have agreed to visit Vesuvius together; I wish to contemplate that astonishing prodigy with you, to learn to admire you, and, during the excursion itself, if I am able, to com-

municate all that relates to my destiny. My confidence must precede yours ; upon this my resolution is fixed."—" Well ! be it so," added Corinna, " you then give me till to-morrow. I thank you for this one day. Ah ! who can tell whether you will still regard me with the same affection, when I shall have opened my whole heart to you ! who can tell ? and how can I avoid trembling at the doubt ?

CHAPTER IV.

THE ruins of Pompeii are on the same part of the coast with Vesuvius; and with the examination of these ruins, Corinna and Lord Nelvil began their journey. Both were silent; for the moment which was to prove decisive of their fate was approaching; and that vague hope, in which they had so long indulged, and which is so well adapted to the reverie inspired by the climate of Italy, was at length to give place to positive destiny. Pompeii, which they visited together, is the most curious ruin of antiquity. At Rome little more is to be seen than the fragments of public monuments, and these serve only to retrace the political history of past ages; but at Pompeii you have a faithful representation of the private life of the ancients.

The volcano, in overwhelming the city with ashes, protected it from the ravages of time. Edifices exposed to the atmosphere could never have remained in this condition, and accordingly this lost monument of antiquity was found again entire. The paintings and bronzes retained all their original beauty, and every article employed for the purposes of domestic life was in the most wonderful state of preservation. The amphoræ are yet prepared for the entertainment of the following day. The flour which was just going to be kneaded is still distinctly visible. The remains of a female are still ornamented with the finery that she wore on the holiday which the volcano interrupted, and her withered arm no longer fills up the bracelet of precious stones which still surrounds it. No where can there be displayed so striking a picture of the sudden interruption of life. The ruts of wheels are distinctly traced on the pavement of the streets, and the stone-

work surrounding the tops of the wells bear the marks of the ropes which gradually furrowed it. On the walls of a guard-house are still visible the badly formed characters, and rudely-sketched figures, which the soldiers executed by way of passing the time, without ever suspecting that time was rapidly hastening the period of their total destruction.

On placing yourself at the crossing of the streets, where you have a view in all directions of the city, which is still nearly entire, you would suppose that some one was expected, and that the arrival of the master might be every moment looked for; and the very appearance of life, which this abode presents, gives a more melancholy impression of its eternal silence. The greater part of these houses, which were overwhelmed with lava, are themselves built of fragments of the same matter. Thus do we behold ruins upon ruins, and tombs upon tombs! That his-

tory of the world, which takes its epochas from the most signal instances of successive destruction, that condition of human life which we endeavour to trace by the lights of the volcanoes which have consumed it, fills the heart with the most profound melancholy. What a length of time since the individual existed! How many ages have elapsed since he lived, since he suffered, and since he perished! Where can we retrace his feelings and his thoughts? Are they yet impressed on the atmosphere which we breathe amidst these ruins, or are they for ever deposited in heaven, the mansion of immortality?— A few charred manuscripts, discovered at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and which are at present unrolling at Portici, are all that remains by which we can procure any knowledge of the unfortunate victims of the volcanic eruption. But on approaching these ashes, which art succeeds in reanimating, one fears even to breathe, lest a single puff of air should disperse

that dust which perhaps is yet charged with many noble ideas.

The public edifices in Pompeii, though one of the most diminutive cities it Italy, possess considerable elegance. The munificence of the ancients was almost always expended upon objects of public interest. Their private dwellings are very small, and do not afford any specimens of splendid decoration. Yet they supply us with monks of a vivid taste for the fine arts. Almost every part of the interior of the walls was ornamented with the most agreeable pictures, and the floors were paved with the most elegant mosaic-work. On many of these pavements is inscribed the word *Salve*. The inscription is placed on the threshold of the entrance. Undoubtedly this salutation was not merely a customary civility, but rather an invocation to hospitality. The chambers are wonderfully narrow, and badly lighted; there are no windows towards the street; almost all of them look into a portico in

the interior of the building, and the marble court which it surrounds. In the centre of this court is a cistern decorated in a style of simplicity. From this kind of habitation, it is evident that the ancients lived almost entirely in the open air, and that they received their guests in a similar situation. Nothing can convey a more soothing, a more voluptuous idea of existence than this climate, which so intimately connects man with nature. With such habits, the character of conversation and society must naturally differ from that of countries, where, from the severity of the climate, the inhabitants are compelled to confine themselves within doors. The dialogues of Plato became more familiar to us after viewing these porticos, under which the ancients walked during half the day. They were incessantly enlivened by the spectacle of a serene sky. The social order, in their view of things was not a dry combination of revenue and force, but a happy aggregate of institu-

tions which roused and unfolded all the faculties of the soul, and directed the energies of man towards the improvement of himself and his fellow-creatures.

Antiquity inspires an insatiable curiosity. Those of the learned, who totally occupy themselves in collecting a list of names, which they denominate history, are most certainly devoid of all imagination. But to penetrate the past; to interrogate the human heart, at the distance of centuries; to ascertain a fact from a single word, and the character and manners of a nation from the fact; in short, to go back to the most remote periods, in order to form our idea of what appearance the world in the early stage of its existence assumed, in the eyes of mankind, and in what manner they then supported that gift of life which civilization has now rendered so complex, is a continual effort of the imagination to divine and discover the most delightful secrets which reflec-

tion and study can reveal. Oswald was singularly attracted by this species of interest and occupation, and he frequently repeated to Corinna, that if he had not some honourable interests to promote in his own country, he should not have found life supportable but in those regions where the monuments of history supply the place of present existence. Celebrity, when no longer capable of being attained, must at least excite a feeling of regret. It is a total insensibility towards it which alone degrades the mind. But when untoward circumstances disappoint good actions of their aim, the mind may find an asylum in the past.

On leaving Pompeii on their return towards Portici, Corinna and Lord Nelvil were soon surrounded with the inhabitants, who gave them loud invitations to come and see the mountain, the term by which they distinguish Vesuvius. Does it require to be named? To the Neapolitans it is at once their boast and their na-

tive soil; their country derives celebrity from this prodigy of nature. At Oswald's request, Corinna was conveyed in a sort of palanquin as far as the hermitage of St. Salvador, which is about half way up the mountain, and where travellers generally repose themselves before they venture to climb the summit. He rode by her side to superintend those who were conveying her, and the more his heart was filled with the generous sentiments inspired by nature and history, the more he adored Corinna.

At the foot of Vesuvius is the most fertile and best cultivated tract in the whole kingdom of Naples, that is, in the country most favoured of heaven of any in Europe. The celebrated vine which produces the *Lachryma Christi* grows on this spot, and quite close to parts devastated by lava. One might imagine, that here, on the confines of the volcano, nature had made a last effort, and decorated

herself with her choicest productions before her final extinction. In the progress of the ascent, on looking back, the view of Naples and the charming environs gradually enlarges itself. The sea sparkles like precious stones from the reflexion of the sun's rays; but all the splendour of the creation gradually vanishes as you approach that tract of ashes and smoke which indicates the proximity of the volcano. The ferruginous lavas of preceding years trace their broad and black furrows in the soil, and all around them is sterility. At a certain height no birds are seen to fly; a little higher up the traces of vegetation become very rare, and still further the very insects find no means of subsistence in this waste of nature. Every thing, in short, which contains life disappears; you enter the dominions of death, and the ashes of this pulverized soil alone move under your sliding footsteps.

Nè gregi nè armenti
Guida bifolco mai, guida, pastore.

[Not the shepherd, nor pastor, ever hither led their flocks or herds].

Here, upon the confines of life and death, an hermit has fixed his habitation A tree, the last farewell of vegetation, stands before the entrance; and under the shelter of its pale foliage travellers usually wait for the approach of night, in order to continue their rout; for during the day the flames of Vesuvius seem only to be clouds of smoke, and the lava, which is so vivid by night, has only a dusky hue in the sunshine. This metamorphosis alone affords a fine spectacle, and every evening renews that astonishment which a continuation of the same appearance would enfeeble. The impression of the scene, its profound solitude, gave Lord Nelvil greater force to reveal his secret sentiments; and wishing to encourage the confidence of Corinna, he broke silence, and with the most lively emotion said,

"You wish to read the inmost heart of your unfortunate friend. Be it so! I will frankly confess all. My wounds, I am aware, will bleed afresh; but in the presence of immutable nature, should we still retain so much dread of the sufferings which time carries away in its train?"

BOOK XII.

CHAP. I.

HISTORY OF LORD NELVIL.

"I WAS brought up under my father's roof with a degree of tenderness and indulgence, which I much more highly estimate, since I have become acquainted with mankind. To no one have I ever been so profoundly attached as my father; and yet had I known then so well as I do now, how seldom such characters are to be met with in the world, I think my affection would have been warmer and more devoted. I recal to memory a thousand traits of his life, which then appeared quite simple to me, because they actually were such to my father, and which affect me with

painful regret now that I know their value. The self-reproaches which we feel with respect to an individual dear to us, and who is now no more, gives an idea of what we might conjecture eternal punishment to be, did not divine mercy interpose to avert it.

"Under my father's roof I was tranquil and happy; but I wished to travel previous to my going into the army. My country holds out the noblest political career for men endowed with the gift of eloquence; but I had, and still have, so great a share of timidity, that it would have been very painful for me to speak in public; and I therefore gave the preference to a military life. I was more inclined to confront certain peril than possible disgust. My vanity is, in every respect, more susceptible than ambitious; and I have always thought that men look like gigantic phantoms when they censure, and like pygmies when they praise. I was anxious

to visit France, where had just broken forth that Revolution, which, notwithstanding the decrepitude of the human race, pretended to recommence the history of the world. My father entertained some prejudices against Paris, which he had visited towards the close of the reign of Louis XV., and could with difficulty conceive how *coteries* could have been transformed into a nation, pretensions into virtues, and frivolities into enthusiasm. He, however, consented to the journey on which I had set my mind, because he was averse to the appearance of constraint. He was somewhat embarrassed with his paternal authority, when a regard to duty did not command its exertion. He was always on his guard lest this authority should impair the truth and purity of affection, which essentially depend upon the free and involuntary principles of our nature; and the first wish of his heart was to be beloved. At the commencement, therefore, of the year 1791, when I had

just completed my twenty-first year, he consented to my taking a six months tour in France; and I accordingly set out to make myself acquainted with that people, who are so near to us, and yet so different in their institutions and the habits resulting therefrom.

"I thought I should never become partial to the country, being prepossessed with all the prejudices against it which spring from the haughtiness and gravity of the English character. I dreaded to hear every thing which interests the mind or the heart made a subject of ridicule; and I detested the art of repressing every flight of the affections, and disenchanting every extacy of love and friendship. The ground-work of that so much vaunted gaiety had to me a very forbidding aspect, inasmuch as it seemed the grave of all the sensations which I held most dear. I was not then acquainted with the truly distinguished class of Frenchmen, who

to the noblest qualities unite the most charming manners. The simplicity and freedom predominant in the societies of Paris struck me with astonishment. The most important interests were there treated without frivolity or pedantry. The most profound topics seemed to have become the patrimony of conversation, and the revolution of the entire globe appeared to be intended only to render the society of Paris more amiable. I found men of grave erudition, of superior talent, animated with a desire of pleasing still more strongly than with that of being useful, becoming candidates for the suffrages of a drawing-room, after obtaining those of a public assembly, and frequenting the company of females more from the wish of being applauded than of being loved.

"With regard to external happiness, every thing was in the most perfect state of combination at Paris. There was no constraints in any of the details of life; there

might be egotism at bottom, but it never shewed itself in the form of intercourse; there was an activity, an interest which occupied all your time, without leaving you much the gainer, but at the same time without ever letting it hang heavy on your hands; a promptness of conception, which admitted of communicating and comprehending by a single word, what any where else would have required a tedious explanation; a spirit of imitation, which it is true might be inconsistent with real independence of thought, but which introduced into conversation that sort of harmony and general complaisance which is to be found in no other place; in short, there was an easy mode of conducting life, of diversifying it, and exempting it from reflection, without banishing the charms of intellectual converse. To all these means of killing time you have to add, theatres, strangers, and news, and you will have an idea of the most social city on the surface the globe. I almost experience a sensa-

tion of astonishment at pronouncing its name in this hermitage, in the midst of a desert, and at the opposite extreme of the impressions produced by the most active population on earth; but it was necessary to give you a description of the place and the effect it had upon me.

" Would you think it, Corinna, I whom you have seen so pensive and dejected, suffered myself to be drawn within the sphere of this sprightly vortex. I was happy in experiencing no interval of languor, though I had not a moment left for meditation, and in blunting my sense of suffering, at the risk of impairing my susceptibility of attachment. If I may judge by myself a man of a serious and sensible character may be fatigued from the very intenseness and depth of his impressions. His natural propensity continually recurs; but whatever tends to divert him from it, for a time at least, confers on him a substantial benefit. It is by raising me above

my own level, Corinna, that you dissipate my natural melancholy. It was by lessening the real value of my character, that a female, of whom I shall speak presently, diverted my internal pensiveness. Nevertheless, though I might have caught the taste and habit of a Parisian life, it would not have gratified me for any length of time, had I not procured the friendship of a man who was a perfect model of the French character in its state of ancient generosity, and of the French genius under the refinements of modern cultivation.

"I will not, my friend, inform you of the genuine names of the persons whom I am going to describe, and from the sequel of my story you will easily comprehend my reasons for concealing them. *Count Raimond* was descended from one of the most illustrious families in France. His soul was animated with all the romantic pride of his ancestors, and his reason adopted the doctrines of philosophy when

they commanded personal sacrifices. He did not take any part in the revolution, but he was attached to the virtuous of both parties. The intrepidity of gratitude in the one, the love of freedom in the other, all that was disinterested gave him pleasure. The cause of all that laboured under oppression appeared just in his eyes, and this generosity of character was heightened by his extreme carelessness with regard to the preservation of his own life. Not that he was actually wretched, but such was the contrast between his heart and society, as it is in general constituted, that the pain which this consideration daily inflicted upon him, abstracted him, as it were, from himself. I was fortunate enough to interest Count Raimond. He wished to overcome my natural reserve, and in order to obtain this triumph, he mingled with our intercourse a sort of friendly coquetry which was truly romantic; disregarding every obstacle, when any opportunity occurred of doing me

either an important service, or a trifling pleasure. Sooner than forego my society he was willing to reside half his time in England; nay, I had considerable difficulty to dissuade him from dividing with me all that he possessed.

"I have but one sister," he would say, "who is married to a very rich old man, and I am completely at liberty to dispose of my fortune as I please. Besides this revolution will take an unfortunate turn, and I may, not improbably, lose my life. Permit me, then, to enjoy my possessions by regarding them as yours." Alas! the generous Raimond but too truly foresaw his destiny. The man who is capable of knowing himself, is seldom mistaken as to the complexion of his fate; and presentiments are, for the most part, nothing more than self-judgments which are not yet completely pronounced. Noble, sincere, and even imprudent, Count Raimond exhibited his whole soul at one view. A

character such as this was to me a new source of pleasure. With us the treasures of the heart are not readily unfolded, and we have acquired a habit of doubting of every thing which presents itself. But that expansive goodness which I remarked in my friend, furnished me gratifications at once tranquil and secure; and I had not the slightest doubt as to the qualities of his character, though all of them were disclosed from the moment of our first interview. In my relations with him I experienced no timidity, and what was of still greater value, he reconciled me to myself. Such was that amiable Frenchman for whom I entertain that perfect friendship, that sort of soldier-like comradeship, of which we are only susceptible in our younger days, before we have experienced a feeling of rivalry, and before the indelible lines of fate have furrowed and laid out the field of futurity.

Count Raimond one day thus addressed me: "My sister is a widow, I am glad

of it. I never liked her marriage; she accepted the hand of the old gentleman who is just dead, at a time when neither of us possessed any fortune, for mine comes from an inheritance to which I have but recently succeeded; still, however, I opposed this union at the time with all my power: I do not like the system of doing nothing by calculation, much less the most solemn action of one's life. But after all, she conducted herself admirably with a husband whom she never loved. All has passed off very well in the opinion of the world; and now that she is disengaged, she returns to live with me. You shall see her: she is, in the main, a very engaging woman, and you English are very fond of making discoveries. As to me, I like better to read the whole of a man's character at once in his countenance; your reserved manners, however, my dear Oswald, never gave me any uneasiness; but I am not quite so much at home with my sister.

"Madame D'Arbigny, Count Raimond's sister, arrived on the following morning, and I was introduced to her in the evening of the same day. Her features resembled those of her brother; her voice too was somewhat like his, but her modulation was very different, and there was much more of reserve and finesse in the expression of her countenance; for the rest, her figure was very agreeable, her stature graceful, and every moment gave proofs of the most finished elegance. In her conversation not a word was misplaced; not even the most trifling form of civility was overlooked by her, while at the same time there was nothing over-done in her politeness. She flattered one's foible with much address, and succeeded in her aim of pleasing, without lessening her own dignity; for, wherever sensibility was interested, she always expressed herself as if, in this respect, she was desirous to conceal from others what was passing in her heart. This manner had an apparent re-

semblance to that of the females of my native country which captivated me. It indeed struck me, that Madame D'Arbigny too often betrayed that which she seemed willing to conceal, and that chance could scarcely produce so many occasions to call forth involuntary sympathy as were continually starting up to her view; but this reflection passed very lightly across my thoughts, and what I habitually felt in the society of Madame D'Arbigny was new and attractive.

I had never been flattered by any one. With us love, and the enthusiasm which it inspires, make a profound impression; but the art of getting possession of the heart by practising on one's weak side is but little known. Besides, I had but just quitted the university, and before my departure from England had not attracted the particular attention of any one. Madame D'Arbigny caught at every word which fell from my lips; she waited upon

me with incessant attention: not that I think she was altogether mistress of every circumstance in my character; but she made me acquainted with myself by a thousand remarks upon its details, the sagacity of which confounded me. It sometimes occurred to me, that her language bore the appearance of art, that she spoke too well, and in too gentle a tone, that she was too studious of her phraseology; but her resemblance to her brother, the most open-hearted of men, banished these doubts from my mind, and contributed to inspire me with a liking to her.

"I one day remarked to Count Raimond the effect which this resemblance had on my mind. He thanked me, but, after a moment's reflexion said: "My sister and I have, nevertheless, nothing alike in our dispositions." He said no more; but, in calling to my recollection these few words, and a variety of other circumstances, I was convinced in the sequel,

that he had no wish I should espouse his sister. I cannot, however, doubt that such was her intention even then, though it was not so strongly expressed as at a subsequent period. We continued to pass the time together, and in her society; it went off, frequently with pleasure, always without pain. I have since reflected, that she habitually agreed with me in opinion. When I began a sentence, she took care to finish it, or foreseeing the drift of what I was going say, instantly anticipated my wishes. Yet, notwithstanding this perfect gentleness of manner, she exercised a very despotic sway over my conduct. She had a habit of sying: "*surely you will do this, and surely you will do that,*" which, with me, had the effect of an absolute command. I was apprehensive I should totally forfeit her esteem, if I disappointed her expectation; and I attached no little value to that esteem, which was frequently declared in the most flattering expressions.

"Yet be assured, Corinna, (for I was of the same opinion before I became acquainted with you) the feeling with which Madam D'Arbigny inspired me was not love. I never once intimated to her that I loved her. I had doubts whether my father would relish such a daughter-in-law. It did not correspond with his manner of thinking, that I should marry a French lady, and I would do nothing contrary to his wishes. My silence, I can well imagine, was displeasing to Madam D'Arbigny; for she had sometimes a splenetic moment, which, however, she always carried off with an air of pensiveness, that was afterwards accounted for by some affecting occasion, though her countenance, when she was off her guard, indicated at times a considerable share of dryness. But I attributed these inequalities of temper to the nature of our intimacy, with which I myself was far from being satisfied. To love a little, and yet

not to be entirely in love—" there's the rub."

" Neither Count Raimond nor myself ever mentioned his sister's name. This was the first restraint which occurred in our intercourse. But Madame D'Arbigny had repeatedly conjured me not to talk of her to her brother, and when I expressed my surprise at such a request, she answered: " I know not whether your feelings accord with mine; but I cannot endure that a third person, not even my most intimate friend, should be the depositary of my sentiments for another. I am partial to secrecy in all my affections." This explanation was satisfactory, and I complied with her desires. At this juncture I received a letter from my father, ordering me to return to Scotland. The six months appointed for my residence in France had elapsed, and as the disturbances in the country continued to in-

crease, he did not think it any longer a fit place of abode for a foreigner. This letter at first gave me a great deal of pain. I felt, nevertheless, that my father was in the right. It had also a strong desire to see him again; but the life which I led at Paris, in the society of Count Raimond and his sister was so agreeable, that I could not tear myself from it without expressing the most painful regret. I instaintly repaired to Madame D'Arbigny's, shewed her the letter, and while she was reading it, I was so totally absorbed in chagrin, that I did not even remark what impression it made on her. I merely heard her mutter something like a request to delay my departure, to write to my father that I was ill, in short, to evade complying with his commands. I was just going to answer her, and to tell her what was true, that my departure was fixed for the day after, when Count Raimond entered, and, understanding the subject of our conversation, roundly de-

termined that I should obey my father without any hesitation. I was astonished at so sudden a decision; I expected to have been solicited, nay forced, to stay; I thought I should have to struggle with my own regrets, but had no idea my triumph would have been so easy, and for an instant I misconceived the sentiments of my friend. He perceived that this was the case, and taking me by the hand, said: "In three months you will see me in England, why then should I detain you in France. I have my reasons for not wishing to do so," added he in a half-whisper. But his sister overhearing him, suddenly remarked that it would, indeed, be prudent to avoid the dangers to which an Englishman might be exposed in France in the midst of the revolution. I am by this time quite certain that it was not to those dangers Count Raimond alluded; but he neither contradicted nor confirmed his sister's explanation. As I was about to depart, he did not think it necessary to

be more particular. "Could I be of any service to my country, I would remain in it," continued he; "but, you see, France is no more. The ideas and sentiments which made it our object of affection, no longer exist. I shall still regret my absence from the soil, but I shall find my country where I breathe the same air with you." How was my heart affected with the touching expressions of such genuine friendship! how much larger a share of my affections did Raimond, at that instant, occupy, than his sister! she was not slow in remarking it, and that same evening I saw her in a new point of view; she had company; she performed the honours of the hostess most admirably, spoke of my departure with the greatest simplicity, and left a general impression, that to her it was quite a thing of course. I had, on several previous occasions, remarked that she was so tenacious of public opinion that she never

disclosed to any one the sentiments which she entertained for me; but, upon this occasion, she went to the contrary extreme, and I felt myself so much hurt by her indifference that I resolved to go away before the rest of the company, to prevent my being for a single moment left alone with her. Observing me approach her brother to request he would come to bid me adieu, on my setting off the next morning, she came up to me, and in a voice loud enough to let the whole company hear her, said, "that she had a letter to trouble me with for one of her female friends in England," naturally adding, in a very low tone—"you regret only your separation from my brother; you speak to him only, and by going away in this manner you intend to wound me to the heart." Thus saying, she returned to seat herself in the midst of her circle. I was hurt at these expressions, and was on the point of staying, in compliance with her wishes, when Count

Raimond took me by the arm and conducted me to his chamber.

"The whole of the company were no sooner gone, than we heard Madame D'Arbigny's bell going repeatedly and with great violence. Count Raimond took no notice of it. I prevailed on him, however, to pay some attention to it, and, on sending to know the cause, we were told that Madame D'Arbigny had been taken suddenly ill. I wished to see her again, and proposed to return to her apartment once more, but Count Raimond resolutely prevented me from doing so. "Let us avoid these agitations," said he, "women best console themselves when left alone." I could not comprehend this hard-heartedness with regard to his sister, which formed so strong a contrast with the constant benevolence of my friend, and I parted from him the following morning with a kind of embarrassment which diminished the tenderness of our adieu.

Ah! had I conjectured those sentiments of the most refined delicacy which prevented him from consenting that his sister should captivate me, when he did not think her calculated to make me happy; but, above all, had I foreseen those events which separated us for ever! my adieu would have been satisfactory both to his heart and my own.

CHAPTER II.

OSWALD here made a pause for a few seconds. Corinna had listened to him with so much avidity, that she also was silent from the fear of retarding the resumption of his narrative. "Happy had I been," continued he, "had my intercourse with Madame D'Arbigny terminated here; had I remained at home with my father, and never again set foot on the soil of France. But destiny, or perhaps more properly speaking, my own weakness of character, has for ever poisoned the course of my existence. Yes! for ever, my dearest friend, even in your society!

"I passed nearly a year in Scotland with my father, and our mutual attachment

daily acquired fresh strength. I penetrated into the sanctuary of that heavenly mind, and in the friendship which united us, I recognised those sympathies of kindred, whose mysterious ties pervade and connect every part of our lives. I received some letters from Raimond, written in the most affectionate terms. He recounted the difficulties which he experienced in converting his estates into money, with the intention of joining me; but his perseverance in this project was still the same. I was still attached to him; but what friend could I put in competition with my father? The respect with which he inspired me placed no restraint on my confidence. I implicitly consulted the inclinations of my father, as if they had been the dictates of an oracle; and all the irresolution inherent in my character disappeared the instant he spoke. "Heaven," says an English writer, "has formed us to love whatever is venerable." My father did not, could not, indeed,

know to the full extent how much I loved him; and my unhappy conduct may have given him reasons to doubt the sincerity of my attachment. Yet he took pity on me, and on his death-bed lamented the sorrow which I should feel on account of his loss. Ah! I am advancing in this sad recital; support my courage, for I have need of your aid." "My dear friend," said Corinna, "let it be some consolation to you, that you are displaying the nobleness and sensibility of your soul, before her who most admires and cherishes you."

"He sent me to London," resumed Lord Nelvil, "to transact some business for him, and I parted with him, without the slightest presentiment of my misfortune. At our last interview he was more amiable than ever. It may be said, that the souls of the just, like flowers, more abundantly give out their fragrance in the evening. With tears in his eyes he clasped me in his embraces. Often had he reminded me,

that, at his time of life, every thing partook of solemnity. But I confided in his life as in my own. So perfect was our accord, and so much juvenile ardour animated his affection, that his age never occurred to my thoughts. In our vivid emotions, confidence is equally inexplicable as fear. My father upon this occasion accompanied me to the gate of his seat, that seat which I have since seen deserted and desolate as my own heart.

"I had not been a week in London, when I received from Madame D'Arbigny that fatal letter, every word of which is engraven on my memory. These were its contents:—"Yesterday, the 10th of Au-"gust, my brother was murdered at the "Thuilleries, while defending his sove-"reign. I am proscribed as his sister, and "compelled to seek for safety from my "persecutors in concealment. Count "Raimond took the whole of my fortune, "for the purpose of remitting it with his

" own to England. Has it already reached
" you, or do you know to whom he con-
" fided it for the purpose of remittance?
" I had only a short note from him, writ-
" ten from the palace at the moment he
" learnt that dispositions were making for
" the attack, and this note merely tells me
" to address myself to you for all particu-
" lars. If you could come here to take
" me away with you, you would perhaps
" save my life, for the English still travel
" unmolested in every part of France,
" and it is impossible for me to procure a
" passport, as my brother's name renders
" me an object of suspicion. Should the
" unfortunate sister of Raimond still suffi-
" ciently interest you to induce you to
" come in quest of her, you will on your
" arrival in Paris, learn of M. de Mal-
" tigues, my relative, the place of my re-
" treat. But if you entertain the gene-
" rous intention of relieving me, lose not
" a moment in effecting it, for according

" to report, war is daily expected to break " out between the two countries."

" Picture to yourself the effect which this letter had upon me. My friend butchered; his sister inconsolable; and their fortune, which she supposed safe in my hands, not yet remitted, or accounted for. To these circumstances add the danger to which Madame D'Arbigny was exposed, and her idea that I could serve her by going to fetch her. To hesitate seemed to me impossible, and I instantaneously set off, after dispatching a messenger to my father with the letter which I had received, and a promise of my returning within a fortnight. By a truly cruel mischance, my messenger was taken ill on the road, and my second letter, written from Dover, reached my father prior to my first. He thus became apprised of my departure without knowing its motives, and before the explanation reached him he had conceived a degree of anxiety on the

subject of this journey which could never be dissipated.

"I arrived at Paris in three days, and learning that Madame D'Arbigny had retired to a provincial city about sixty leagues from the capital, I continued my route to join her. Both of us were deeply affected on our again seeing each other. In her distress she was more amiable than ever, because there was less of art and constraint in her deportment. We bewailed in concert the fate of her noble brother, and the public disasters. I anxiously enquired about her fortune, and was answered that she had never had any intelligence respecting it. But in a few days after I discovered that the banker with whom Raimond had lodged it, had duly paid her the amount; and what is singular I learnt this from a merchant of the city where we then were, who mentioned the matter accidentally, and assured me that Madame D'Arbigny never

had any serious cause of alarm upon that account. I was perplexed with this statement, and repaired to Madame D'Arbigny to have the mystery cleared up. I found with her one of her relations, M. de Maltigues, who told me with a wonderful degree of promptitude and gravity, that he had that instant arrived from Paris, to inform Madame D'Arbigny of the return of the banker whom she supposed to have set out for England, and of whom she had heard nothing for a month. Madame D'Arbigny confirmed his assertion, and I believed it, though I could not help recollecting that she always found excuses for not shewing her brother's letter. I have since ascertained that she made use of an artifice to alarm me respecting her fortune.

" Madame D'Arbigny was certainly rich, and her desire of espousing me did not proceed from any interested motive; but the great fault of this lady lay in

making the expression of sentiment a serious enterprize, of employing address where love was sufficient, and using incessant dissimulation when it would have been better to throw off all disguise; for she was at that time as strongly attached to me as one could be, with whom all she knew and almost all she thought was the result of combination, and who conducted the relations of the heart on the footing of a political intrigue.

" Madame D'Arbigny's pensiveness but heightened the effect of her personal attractions, by imparting to her mien and air an expression of tenderness which gave me peculiar pleasure. I had solemnly declared to her, that I would never marry without obtaining the consent of my father; but I could not resist the impulse of letting her know the transport of passion which her alluring figure excited in my bosom. As it was a part of her plan to lead me captive at all hazards, I thought I

could perceive that she was not unalterably resolved to repulse my approaches; and now that I can coolly bring to mind all that passed between us, my opinion is, that she hesitated from motives foreign to love, and that her apparent struggles were the result of secret deliberation. I was left alone with her during the whole of the day, and notwithstanding the resolutions dictated by my sense of delicacy, I could not resist the violent transports of my attachment, and Madame D'Arbigny, by granting me every privilege, laid me under every obligation. She manifested greater regret and remorse than perhaps she really felt, and, by her very repentance, linked me more strongly to her fate. I proposed to bring her along with me to England, to introduce her to my father, and to entreat his consent to our union; but she refused to quit France, unless I declared her my wedded spouse. In this she was perhaps right; but being well aware from the beginning that I could not

bring myself to the determination of marrying without my father's permission, she was wrong in the means which she took to prevent her own departure, and to detain me, notwithstanding the duties which enjoined my return to England.

"When war was declared between the two countries, I was more vehemently desirous of quitting France, and Madame D'Arbigny continued to multiply the obstacles in the way of my purpose. At one time, a passport was not to be had; at another, she would assure me, that if I set out alone, her life would be endangered by remaining in France after my departure, as she would be suspected of maintaining a correspondence with me. She who was in general so gentle, so composed in her deportment, would at intervals yield herself up to paroxysms of despair, which harrowed my very soul. The graces of her mind and person were em-

ployed to please me, and her melancholy to intimidate me.

" Females are perhaps in the wrong to exercise command under the authority of their tears, and thus to subjugate strength to their weakness; but when they are not afraid to employ such means, they almost always succeed, or at least for a time. Doubtless sensibility is impaired by the very empire which is usurped over it, and the force of tears too often exercised renders the imagination cold and callous. But in France, at this particular period, there were a thousand occasions tending to reanimate interest and sympathy. Madame D'Arbigny's health seemed also to be daily impaired; and indisposition furnishes the female creation with another formidable instrument of dominion. Those who do not, like you, Corinna, possess a just confidence in their own minds, and a command of their feelings, or who are not, like our English fair, so high-spi-

rited and yet so timid, that affectation is to them almost impracticable, have recourse to artifice as the means of inspiring affection; and when once that is the case, the best that can be expected of them is, that their dissimulation shall prove to have been founded in real attachment.

"A third party, without my knowledge, interposed himself in my relations with Madame D'Arbigny; this was M. de Maltigues. She caught his fancy, and he wished above all things to be honoured with her hand. But a studied system of immorality rendered him indifferent to every consideration. He loved intrigue as an amusement, even when nowise interested in the issue, and while he aided in promoting Madame D'Arbigny's desire of being united with me, was nevertheless on the alert to counteract her purpose, should an opportunity occur of forwarding his own interests. He was a man towards whom I felt a singular aversion. Al-

though scarcely thirty years old, his air and manner were remarkably phlegmatic. In England, where we are accused of excessive reserve, I never saw any thing to equal the serious air with which he would enter a room. I should never have taken him for a Frenchman, were it not for his love of pleasantry, and a loquacity which seemed unaccountable in a man whose feelings were callous with regard to every species of enjoyment, and who systematically acted in conformity to that disposition. He pretended that he brought into the world with him a large share of sensibility, and a warmth of temperament bordering on enthusiasm, but that a knowledge of mankind acquired from the French revolution, had completely disencumbered him of these qualities. He had discovered, he was wont to say, that there was nothing *good* in this world but fortune or power, or both united, and that friendships in general were to be regarded only as *means* which were to be used or

discontinued according to circumstances. He was a tolerable proficient in the practice of this doctrine, committing only one fault, which was that of avowing his opinion; but though he was not influenced like the Frenchmen of former days, by the desire of pleasing, he retained the anxiety to shine in conversation, and this made him far exceed the bounds of prudence. In this respect he differed extremely from Madame d'Arbigny, who was equally intent upon the accomplishment of her purpose, but would not, like M. de Maltigues, betray herself from a desire of distinction, even at the expence of her morality. In company, the most singular circumstance in the conduct of these two persons was, that the *susceptible female* could pretty well conceal her secret, and that the *phlegmatic male* found it impossible to be silent.

But M. de Maltigues, such as he was, had obtained a singular ascendancy over

Madame D'Arbigny. He seemed to penetrate her character, or, more probably, she reposed unlimited confidence in him. Though habitually a dissembler, she perhaps found it necessary, by way of a breathing-time, to make occasionally, one imprudent disclosure. Thus much, at least, is certain, that she was always disconcerted when M. de Maltigues gave her a look of severity. If he seemed, at any time, dissatisfied, she instantly got up and took him apart; if he went away in a pet, she immediately retired to write to him. I accounted, in my own mind, for this influence of M. de Maltigues over Madame D'Arbigny by his intimacy with her from her childhood, and being in the management of her affairs from the time she had lost every nearer relative. But the chief motives of Madame D'Arbigny's attentions to M. de Maltigues, was the plan she had formed, and of which I too late became apprised, of espousing him if I threw her off, for upon no account could

she think of passing for a widow in despair. Such a determination would lead one to conclude, that she was not attached to me, and yet there was no reason but affection for giving me the preference. But all her life was a mixture of deliberation and passion, of the artificial forms of society and the natural affections. She would shed tears because she was moved herself; but she would also shed tears, because they excited the sensibility of others. She felt pleasure in being loved, because she loved in return, but also because the world attaches some value to the reputation of being loved. She had the best of sentiments when alone, but she felt no enjoyment in them, unless she could employ them in the way of gratifying her vanity or accomplishing her desires. She was a woman wholly formed by and for fashionable life, and who possessed that art of disguising truth, so frequently to be met with in countries where the desire of producing effect by one's sen-

timents is much stronger than the sentiments themselves.

" I had no tidings of my father for a length of time, the war having interrupted our correspondence. A letter, however, at last reached me by a private conveyance. In this he conjured me, by my own sense of duty, and my regard to his affection, to set out on my return; declaring, at the same time, in the most solemn manner, that my espousing Madame D'Arbigny would be to give him a death-blow, and entreating that, at least, I would return to England unfettered, and not form a final resolution until I heard what he had to say on the subject. I instantly answered his letter by giving him my word of honour, that I would not marry without his consent.

" Madame D'Arbigny at first employed prayers, then despaired to retain me, but finding that she could not succeed, I be-

lieve she had recourse to intrigue; but at that time how could I suspect this!

"One morning she came to me. Her countenance was pale, and her hair dishevelled; she threw herself into my arms, supplicating me to protect her, and appeared quite overcome by terror. In the midst of her emotions it was with difficulty I discovered that an order had been issued to arrest her as the sister of Count Raimond, and that it was necessary I should immediately find her an assylum to protect her from those who pursued her. At this period even women had suffered, and all her terrors appeared natural. I conducted her to the house of a merchant who was devoted to me, and I believed I had saved her. M. de Maltigues and I were the only persons acquainted with the secret of her retreat. Under such circumstances how was it possible not to be interested in the fate of woman! how could I separate myself from a proscribed

female? was it possible I could ever be capable of saying to her, you have relied on my support, but I now withdraw it? The recollection of my father, however, continually pursued me, and several times I endeavoured to obtain permission from Madame D'Arbigny to return alone; but she accused me with the design of leaving her to her assassins, and went twice abroad in open day in a state of agitation which filled me with grief and alarm. I followed her into the street and in vain conjured her to return, fortunately, either by accident or by design, we each time met M. de Maltigues, and he brought her back, making her sensible of the imprudence of her conduct. I then resolved to remain, and I wrote to my father, justifying my conduct as much as possible, but I blushed to be in France in the midst of the terrible events which were passing there, and while that country was at war with mine.

" M. de Maltigues frequently ridiculed my scruples; but ingenious as he was, he did not perceive, or did not give himself the trouble to examine, the effect of his pleasantries; for they awakened in me all the sentiments he wished to extinguish. Madame D'Arbigny saw very plainly the impression which they made, but she had no influence over M. de Maltigues, who frequently decided from caprice, because he felt no interest. To excite my compassion she reverted to her real sorrow, to her exaggerated grief. She rendered the declining state of her health evident as much for the purpose of pleasing as for paining me; for she was never so attractive as when she fainted at my feet. She knew how to set off her beauty as well as all the accomplishments she possessed; and her external charms were skilfully combined with her inward emotions, in order to captivate me.

" Thus I continued to live in doubt,

trouble, and anxiety; trembling when I received a letter from my father, and still more unhappy when I received none; retained by the attachment I felt for Madame D'Arbigny, but still more by fear of her despair. By a singular composition of character, though she was mild, equal, and frequently gay, in the ordinary circumstances of life, yet she was uncommonly violent when particular events occurred. One day in the month of September 1793, after I had been more than one year in France, I received a letter from my father which contained only a few words, but these words were so sorrowful that you must spare me, Corinna, the pain of repeating them. My father was then indisposed, but feelings of delicacy and dignity prevented him from mentioning his illness. The whole of his letter, however, expressed regret both for my absence and for the possibility of my marriage with Madame D'Arbigny, that I cannot yet conceive how I did not foresee on reading

it the misfortunes with which I was threatened. At the same time I was sufficiently moved to make me no longer hesitate, and I went to Madame D'Arbigny perfectly determined to bid her farewell. She quickly penetrated my resolution, and after shrinking, as it were, within herself, she suddenly started up and said, "before you go it is proper you should know a secret which I blush to disclose. If you abandon me my death alone will not be the consequence: the fruit of my shame and my criminal amour will perish with me." It is impossible to describe the emotion I felt. This new and sacred duty engrossed my whole mind, and I became a devoted slave subject to Madame D'Arbigny.

I would have married her as she desired, had it not been for the obstacles which then existed to the marriage of an Englishman in France, in consequence of it being necessary for the parties to de-

clare their names to the civil magistrate. I therefore postponed our union until we should be able to go together to England, and until that opportunity occurred I resolved not to quit Madame D'Arbigny. She became calm when she was relieved from the apprehension of sudden departure; but she soon resumed her complaints, and appeared alternately offended and vexed that I did not surmount all the difficulties that stood in the way of our marriage. I would have yielded at last to her wishes: I fell into a deep melancholy: I passed whole days at home, without being able to go abroad: an idea which I never avowed to myself preyed on me and constantly tormented me. I had a presentiment of my father's indisposition, and this forboding appeared to me a weakness. By a singular inconsistency, the result of the alarm which the grief of Madame D'Arbigny occasioned, I resisted my duty as if it had been a passion, and that which might have been considered a passion was obeyed with

pain as a duty. Madame D'Arbigny repeatedly wrote to induce me to come to her. When I went I did not speak to her of her situation, because I never wished to remind her of any circumstance which gave her a claim upon me. I now think that she also said less on the subject than she might have done, but I was then too much vexed to make this observation.

"At last, on one occasion, when I had remained three days at home tormented by remorse, writing letters to my father and tearing them all again, M. de Maltigues, who never came to see me, because we were ill suited for companions, came on a mission from Madame d'Arbigny to draw me from my solitude, but in the success of which, as you may judge, he interested himself very little. On entering he perceived, before I had time to conceal it, that my countenance was covered with tears. "Why this grief?" said he, "leave my cousin or marry her,

both these courses are equally good, since either will put an end to the affair. "There are situations in life," I replied, "in which even by making a sacrifice, one knows not how to perform one's duties." "But there is no occasion for any sacrifice," retorted M. de Maltigues, "I know no circumstances in which that is necessary; address may rescue one from every difficulty: address is mistress of the universe." "I have no anxiety about address," said I, "but I must repeat, that in resigning myself to unhappiness, I wish at least not to afflict those I love." "Believe me," said M. de Maltigues, "it is wrong to introduce into the difficult process of life, sentiment which renders it still more complicated: sentiment is a malady of the soul; I have sometimes felt it as others do, but when that happens I say to myself, I shall soon get over the disease and I always keep my word." "But," replied I, endeavouring to deal like him in generalities, for I could not nor

would not shew him any confidence, " if sentiment can be put aside, honour and virtue will still remain, which are frequently opposed to our desires." " Honour !" exclaimed M. de Maltigues, " do you understand by honour to fight when one is insulted ? In that respect there can be no doubt respecting the meaning of the term, but in other points of view what interest can a man have to fetter himself with a thousand vain delicacies ?" " What interest !" said I, interrupting him, " it seems to me that interest is not the word in question." " To speak seriously," continued M. de Maltigues, " there are few words which have so clear a meaning. I know very well that formerly people used to talk of *an honourable misfortune, a glorious reverse :* But now when every one is persecuted, there is no difference in this world except that which exists between birds which are caught, and those which escape the snare." " I think there is another difference," said

" that of prosperity despised, and adversity honoured by the esteem of the good." " Shew me, then," observed M. de Maltigues, " these good men who are to console you for all your sufferings by their disinterested esteem; it seems to me rather that most men who pretend to be virtuous, excuse you if you are happy, and love you if you are powerful. It is doubtless very good of you not to know how to contradict a father, who now, however, ought not to interfere in your affairs; but there is no reason that you should on that account throw away your existence in every respect; for my part, whatever may happen, I always wish to spare my friends the chagrin of seeing my distress, and myself the disagreeable spectacle of long-visaged consolation." " In my opinion," interrupted I sharply, " the object of life with an honest man is not merely happiness, which centers only in himself, but virtue which contributes to the welfare of others. " Virtue,

virtue"—said M. de Maltigues, hesitating a little, and afterwards speaking decisively: "Virtue is a word for the vulgar, which the augurs could not whisper among themselves without laughter, There are some good souls whom certain words and certain harmonious sounds still influence, and for them the instrument is played; but all the romance of conscience, generosity and enthusiasm has been invented to console those who do not succeed in the world. It is like the *de profundis* which is sung for the dead: The living, when in prosperity, are not anxious to obtain this sort of homage."

I was so irritated by this discourse that I could not avoid saying with disdain, "I should be sorry, Sir, had I any right to interfere in the house of Madame d'Arbigny, to see her receive a man who thought and expressed himself as you do." "When the time comes, you may act as you think proper in that respect,"

replied M. de Maltigues; "but if my cousin would listen to me, she never would marry a man who makes himself so unhappy at the very possibility of such an union. She might have told you long ago that I reproached her weakness, and for all the means she takes to secure an object which is not worth her pains."

At this phrase, which was delivered in accents that rendered it still more insulting, I made a sign to M. de Maltigues to go out with me. On our way he continued to develope his system with the greatest coolness; and though he was aware that in a few moments his existence might be terminated; he did not say a word which evinced either a sense of religion or morality. "Thus I entered into all the fooleries of young men," said he, "do you not think that what passes in my country would have cured me? Have you ever found that being scrupu-

lous after your manner answers any good purpose?" "I agree with you," said I, "that in your country at present it has less influence than in other places; but in time or beyond time, every thing has its recompence. "Yes," replied M. de Maltigues, "in taking Heaven into your calculations. "And why not?" said I, "one of us is perhaps about to know its value." "If I am to die," continued he, smiling, "I am pretty sure that I shall know nothing about it. If you die, I am sure you will not return to enlighten my mind." In going along, I began to think that if I should be killed by M. de Maltigues, I had taken no precaution to make my fate known to my father, nor to give Madame d'Arbigny a part of my fortune, to which I considered she had a right. While these reflections were passing in my mind, we passed before the house of M. de Maltigues, and I asked his permission to go in and write two letters. He consented, and as we

continued our walk to the fields I delivered the letters to him; at the same time I spoke of Madame d'Arbigny with much interest, recommending her to his care, as I believed he would be a firm friend to her. This proof of confidence affected him, for it is worthy of remark to the honour of human nature, that the men who most openly profess immorality by hazard you give them a proof of your esteem: besides the situation in which we were was sufficiently serious to move M. de Maltigues: but he would not for the world that his emotion had been remarked. He spoke in pleasantry what I believe was suggested by a serious reflexion.

"You are a good creature, my dear Nelvil, and I wish to be generous with you. It is said this sort of conduct gives happiness, and generosity is indeed so infantine a quality, that it ought to be recompensed in heaven rather than on earth. But before I do you this service,

one condition must be made; whatever I may say to you, we must nevertheless fight." I replied to this proposition by an assent given, I believe, rather disdainfully; for his precaution appeared to me very unnecessary. M. de Maltigues continued in a cool and dry tone; "Madame d'Arbigny will not suit you, your characters have nothing in common: besides, your father would be vexed at your marriage, and you would be miserable for afflicting your father. "It would be better than that I, if I live, should marry Madame d'Arbigny, and if you kill me it would still be better were she to marry a third person than be united with you." "My cousin is prudent, and even when she loves, she takes due precautions, in case the time should arrive when she may cease to be loved in return. You will learn all this from her letters. I shall leave them to you; you will find them in my cabinet, of which this is the key. I have been intimate with my cousin I may

say, ever since she was born, and mysterious as she is, you will find that she conceals none of her secrets from me. She believes indeed, that I will only repeat what I have a wish to disclose, and it is true that I am not to be led away by any feeling, but at the same time I do not place great importance in keeping any secret, and I think that men ought not to be bound to silence with regard to the affairs of women. If it is I who must die, I shall it is true, be indebted for this accident to the fine eyes of Madame d'Arbigny, but though I am ready to make this sacrifice for her with a good grace, I am not at all obliged to her for the situation in which her double intrigue has placed me. However, there is no reason to conclude that you are the man to kill me," and, as we were out of the town, on saying these words he drew his sword, and put himself on his guard.

" He had spoken with uncommon viva-

city, and I was confounded with what had fallen from him. The approach of danger, instead of changing his manner, animated him still further, and I could not divine whether he had been disclosing truths or inventing falsehoods from a spirit of revenge. In this uncertainty however, I restrained my efforts against his life. He was less adroit than I was in fencing, and at ten different times I might have plunged my sword in his heart, but I took care only to wound him in the wrist, and to disarm him. He appeared sensible of my conduct, and in conducting him home I reminded him of the conversation which had preceded our combat: he then said, "I am sorry for having betrayed the confidence of my cousin; but danger like wine affects the head. I can however, console myself with this reflection; that you would never have been happy with Madame d'Arbigny. She is too artful for you: for my part however, that is indifferent; I think

her charming, and like her turn of mind extremely; but she will never be able to do any thing to my detriment, and we shall aid each other completely, because marriage will render our interests common: you, on the contrary, with your romantic notions, would have become her dupe. You had it in your power to kill me, and you have given me my life, and of course I cannot refuse you the letters I promised you after my death. Read them, set out for England, and do not vex yourself about the chagrin of Madame d'Arbigny. She will weep because she loves you, but she will soon be consoled, because she is too sensible a woman to make herself really unhappy, and above all knows the world better than to appear so. In three months she will be Madame Maltigues. Every word he said to me was true; the letters he shewed me proved it. I was convinced that Madame d'Arbigny was not in the state in which she had represented herself in order

to compel me to espouse. It was evident she loved me since she declared her passion to M de Maltigues; but she flattered him with so much art, left him so much hope, and in her endeavours to please him, shewed a character so different from what she had always exhibited to me, that it was clear she had it in view to make him her husband if our marriage should not take place. Such, Corinna, was the woman who has for ever bereaved me of the repose of my heart, and the approbation of my conscience!

"I wrote to her on my departure, but saw her no more; I have since learned, that, as M. de Maltigues predicted, she has married him; but I was then far from perceiving all the sorrow that awaited me. I expected to receive my father's pardon. I was convinced that when I should explain to him how I had been deceived, he would have loved me still more because he would have more reason to pity me.

After a journey of more than a month through Germany, I arrived in England full of confidence in the inexhaustible affection of my parent; but, Corinna, on my landing, a public paper informed me that my father was no more. The letters which formed these words, *Lord Nelvil is dead,* were most awful to my eyes. The fire of the volcano now before us is less horrible. This, however, was not all: I learned that he died profoundly afflicted at my residence in France; fearing that I should renounce the military career, espouse a woman of whom he had no good opinion, and, by fixing myself in a country at war with my own, lose all reputation in England. Who knows but these painful thoughts abridged his days—Corinna, Corinna, am I not an assassin, am I not, tell me? "No!" exclaimed she, "no, you are only unhappy; virtue, generosity, have misled you. I respect you as much as I love you: be judged then by my heart, take

it for your conscience. Grief deceives you, believe in her who cherishes you. Ah! love such as I feel it is no illusion: it is because you are the best and the most amiable of men that I admire and adore you." "Corinna," said Oswald, "this homage is not due to me; but it is possible I may not be so criminal as I imagined. My father pardoned me before he died. In a last letter which I found addressed to me were kind words. A letter of mine had reached him and somewhat justified me: but the mischief had then been done, and his grief, on my account, had lacerated his heart.

"When I returned to his castle, and his old servants surrounded me, I disclaimed their consolations, and accused myself in their presence. I prostrated myself on his tomb, and I swore, as if the time of reparation still existed for me, that I never would marry without the consent of my father. Alas! why make a pro-

mise to him who was no more! what signified words spoken in this delirium: I ought, however, at least to consider them as an engagement to do nothing which, during his life, he would have disapproved.

"Corinna, my dearest friend, why do these words alarm you? My father might demand of me the sacrifice of a deceitful woman, who owed entirely to her address the attachment with which she inspired me; but why should Heaven separate me from a woman the most open-hearted, natural, and generous, from her for whom I have felt the first emotions of love, and who, instead of corrupting, purifies every sentiment of my soul.

"On entering my father's chamber, I saw his cloke, his elbow-chair, and his sword there, as usual. Yes! they were there; but his place was vacant, and my tears in vain tried to recal him! This ma-

nuscript, this collection of his thoughts, alone gives me an answer. You are already acquainted with some passages of it," said Oswald, handing it to Corinna. " I always carry it about me; read what he has written upon the duty of children towards their parents: read it, Corinna, your melodious accents will, perhaps, familiarise me to these expressions." Corinna complied with Oswald's request, and read as follows :—

" Ah! how little is necessary to render self-diffident a father or mother who are advanced in life! These can easily believe that they are encumbrances on the face of the earth. How can they think themselves of any value to you, who no longer apply for their advice? You live only in the present moment; you are connected with it by a predominant passion; and all that has no relation to it appears in your eyes antique and superannuated. In short, your head and heart are so con-

stituted, that you conceive you form a solitary point in history. The eternal relations of similitude between time and man escape your attention; and the authority of experience seems only a fiction, or an empty guarantee, invented solely to maintain the credit of the aged, and furnish the last enjoyments of their self-importance. How great your error! The vast theatre of the world has no change of actors; on its stage *man* is the perpetual performer, who, though he may sustain a variety of characters, never undergoes a total renovation; and as all his diversities of form depend on a few ruling passions, the circle of which has been so long completed, it but seldom happens, that in the petty combinations of private life, experience, the science of the past, does not prove a copious source of the most useful instruction.

"Honour then your father and mother, honour and respect them, were it only for

the sake of their past reign; of that period of which they were sole masters, and which will never return; were it only for those years which are for ever lost, and of which they bear the august impression in their countenance.

"Such is your duty, presumptuous children, who seem so impatient to run alone in the path of life. You are certain that those parents who so long delay giving place to you, must at last disappear from the stage of life. That father, whose discourse retains a tinge of austerity, which wounds your pride, that mother whose age imposes upon you cares which are troublesome; they will one day move off, and when they are gone, they will appear to you in a new point of view: for time, which confers senility on those who are present to us, rejuvenates them in our estimation when death has for ever removed them from our sight. Time then gives them a lustre which be-

fore we did not remark. We then view them in the mirror of eternity, where there is neither age nor succession; and if they leave behind them on earth any memorial of their virtues, we would decorate them in imagination with a celestial ray; we would follow them, in our mind's eye, to the abode of the elect; we would contemplate them in those mansions of perfect bliss; and, compared with the vivid colours of which we would compose their sacred crown of glory, we should find ourselves vanish into nothing amidst the most rapturous enjoyments of life, amidst the most splendid and intoxicating of our triumphs."

"Corinna," exclaimed Lord Nelvil, in a heart-rending accent, "do you think these elegant complaints directed against me?"—"No! no!" replied Corinna, "you know he loved and cherished you, and confided in your filial tenderness; and, as you have informed me, these re-

flexions were written long before the indiscretion with which you reproach yourself. Listen rather," continued Corinna, running her eye over the collection which she still held in her hands, "listen to these reflexions upon the subject of indulgence which you will find a few pages further on:—"

"We journey through life with an unsteady pace, and in a path covered with snares. Our senses are seduced by deceitful allurements. The false glimmerings of imagination lead us astray; and it is from experience only that our reason itself derives that degree of information and confidence of which it stands so much in need. So many dangers united with so much weakness; so many different interests, with a capacity so narrow, a foresight so limited; so many things totally unknown to us, and so short a life. Do not all these circumstances, all these conditions of our nature, apprise us of the

high rank which should be assigned to indulgence, in the order of the social virtues?" "Alas! who is there exempt from this weakness? Where is the man who knows no topic of self-accusation? Where the individual who can look back upon his past life without experiencing a single pang of remorse, a single emotion of regret? He alone is a stranger to the agitations of a scrupulous mind, who has never commenced the task of self-examination, never sojourned in the solitude of his conscience."

"Such," resumed Corinna, "is the language in which your father addresses you from his heavenly abode; and this is entirely in your favour." "That is true," replied Oswald; "yes, Corinna, you are my consoling angel, you bind up my wounds; but had I only seen him, for one moment, before his decease; had he learnt from my explanation, that I was not unworthy of him, and assured me that he

thought so, I should not have been agitated with remorse, like the most criminal of mankind; I should not have to accuse myself of that vacillating conduct, that perturbed state of mind, which affords no prospect of happiness to myself or those connected with me. Do not accuse me of weakness. Courage can do nothing against conscience; it is from that it emanates, and how can it triumph over it! At this instant, as the night advances, methinks I behold in yonder clouds those flashes of lightning which pronounce my condemnation. Corinna! Corinna! speak comfort to your unhappy friend, or let me stretch myself on this soil, which may perhaps open to my prayer, and give me admission to the region of the dead."

BOOK XIII.

CHAP. I

VESUVIUS, AND THE PLAIN OF NAPLES.

LORD Nelvil, after this cruel recital which agitated his very soul, remained for a considerable space in a state of profound torpor. Corinna endeavoured to bring him to his recollection by the most gentle means. The stream of fire which issued from Vesuvius, now rendered visible by the surrounding darkness, made a vivid impression on the perturbed imagination of Oswald. Corinna availed herself of this impression to draw off his attention from the remembrances which so much agitated him, and hastened to conduct

him to the brink of the current of ignited lava. The soil which they traversed in their way thither slid from under their feet, and seemed to repel them to a distance from a spot inimical to every living being. Here nature no longer appears to have any relation with man. He can no longer imagine himself lord over her; she escapes from her tyrant by death. The ignited matter is of a dusky, dismal hue; yet when it consumes the vines or trees it gives out a clear and brilliant flame, but the lava itself has that dingy appearance which the poets assign to the rivers of the infernal regions; it rolls on slowly like a stream of sand, blackish by day and red by night. As it approaches you hear a kind of crackling sound, which occasions the greater fear as it is indistinct, and gives the idea of stratagem united to force. Thus the royal tiger secretly approaches with measured steps. The lava advances without any acceleration of its progress, without the loss of a moment. If it meets

a high wall, or any edifice which opposes its passage, it stops, it accumulates in front of the obstacle its black and bituminous torrents, and at length overwhelms it beneath its burning waves. Its progress is not so rapid as to prevent the escape of those who fly before it; but like time, it overtakes the imprudent and the aged, who, remarking its heavy and silent pace, think there is no difficulty in avoiding it. Its resplendency is so intense, that for the first time the earth illuminates the sky, and gives it the appearance of continued lightning; the sky, in its turn, reflects this lustre upon the water, and thus nature seems to be set in flames by this three-fold image of fire.

You hear the rustling of the wind, and its effects are rendered visible by the whirling gusts of flame in the gulf from which the lava is poured forth. You experience a sensation of fear at what is passing in the bowels of the earth, and

are conscious of the raging tumult which makes it tremble beneath your feet. The rocks which surround the source of the lava are overspread with sulphur and bitumen, whose aspect has something of an infernal hue. A livid green, a brownish yellow, and a dingy red, compose a sort of dissonance, which tortures the sight in the same manner as the ear would be grated by those acute sounds which sorceresses uttered, when by their nightly incantations they brought down the moon from heaven.

All that surrounds the volcano reminds one of the infernal abodes, and from this scene the poets doubtless borrowed their descriptions.* It is here that we can

* Here the authoress has permitted her imagination to overstep her reading. Virgil, the second great epic poet who depicted the infernal regions, was dead more than a century before the first eruption of Vesuvius recorded in history, or known from tradition. We may also be permitted to add, that Etna itself was not known as a burning mountain in the days of Homer.—*E.*

figure to ourselves how mankind came to believe in the existence of an evil genius counteracting the designs of Providence. On contemplating such a scene, we naturally ask whether benevolence alone predominated in the phenomena of the creation, or whether there was not some latent principle impelling nature, like man, to ferocity. "Corinna," exclaimed Lord Nelvil, "was this infernal mansion the birth-place of pain? Did the angel of death wing his flight from this summit? Did I not behold thy celestial countenance, I should here lose all recollection of the divine workmanship which decorates the universe; and yet this picture of hell, frightful as it is, strikes me with less horror than the remorse of a guilty heart. Every peril may be braved, but how can he who is no more acquit us of the wrongs of which conscience reproaches us towards him? Never! never! Ah! Corinna, how racking the reflection! The torments invented by the ravings of suffering huma-

nity; the wheel which turns incessantly, the water which flies from the lips, the stone which rolls back the instant it touches the summit, are but feeble images to express that dreadful idea—the impossible, the irreparable!"

Oswald and Corinna were wrapped in profound silence. Their very guides had retired to a distance; and, as on the verge of the crater, there is neither animal, nor insect, nor plant, nothing was heard but the rustling of the agitated flame. Nevertheless, a sound from the city penetrated to the place where they stood; it was the ringing of the bells which was heard across the atmosphere; perhaps it was the knell of death, perhaps the joyful announcement of birth; but however that may be, it excited a soothing emotion in the breasts of our travellers.—"Dear Oswald," said Corinna, "let us quit this desert, and descend towards the abodes of the living; here I am sick

at heart. Every other mountain, in approximating us to the heavens, seems to raise us above terrestrial existence; but here I experience only agitation and horror; methinks I see nature treated as a criminal, and like a being sunk in irrecoverable depravity, doomed never more to feel the beneficent influences of its Creator. Assuredly this is not the abode of the blessed—let us go hence."

A heavy shower of rain came on as Corinna and Lord Nelvil were descending toward the plain, and their torches were every moment in danger of being extinguished. The Lazzaroni who accompanied them uttered continual shouts, calculated to terrify those who were not aware that this was their habitual practice. These people are sometimes agitated by a superabundant animation, of which they know not how to dispose, inasmuch as they unite in the same degree the qualities of indolence and violence. Their physiog-

nomy, more distinctly marked than their character, seems to denote a kind of vivacity, in which the head and heart have not the smallest concern. Oswald, apprehensive lest Corinna might be incommoded by the rain, their lights go out, or in short some danger befal her, no longer occupied himself with any other object; and this tender interest gradually recovered his mind from the condition into which it had been plunged by the proof of confidence which he had just given her. They found their carriage waiting for them at the foot of the mountain; and without stopping at the ruins of Herculaneum, which have been almost again buried in the earth, to prevent the destruction of Portici, which is built on the scite of that ancient city, they arrived at Naples about midnight; and Corinna, on taking leave of Lord Nelvil, promised to communicate to him, on the following morning, the history of her life.

CHAPTER II.

WITH the return of morning Corinna was willing to impose upon herself the effort which she had promised, and though the most intimate knowledge which she had now acquired of Oswald's character redoubled her anxiety, she left her chamber with her manuscript in her hand, trembling as she proceeded, but nevertheless persisting in her resolution to communicate it to him. She entered the parlour of the inn at which both of them put up, and there she found Oswald, who had just received some letters from England. One of them lay on the chimney-piece; and the writing struck Corinna so forcibly, that with indescribable agitation, she enquired from whom it came? "From Lady Edgermond," replied Oswald.—"You

are then in habits of correspondence with her?" added Corinna. "Lord Edgermond," replied Oswald, "was a friend of my father's, and since I have accidentally mentioned her name, I will not affect to conceal from you, that my father had some thoughts that I might one day be disposed to espouse the daughter of his friend, Lucilia Edgermond."—"Great God!" exclaimed Corinna, sinking upon a chair and almost fainting away.

"Whence this cruel emotion?" said Lord Nelvil, "what have you to fear from me, since I love you even to idolatry? Had my father made it his dying request that I should espouse Lucilia, doubtless I would not have thought myself disengaged, and I would have removed beyond the sphere of your irresistible attractions. But he merely suggested this match for my further consideration, in a letter in which he himself stated, that he could not form any settled opinion of Lucilia, who

was then but a child. As for myself, I never saw her but once, and she was then only twelve years old. At my departure I entered into no engagements with her mother; nevertheless the irresolution, the agitation, which you may have occasionally remarked in my conduct, proceeded entirely from this expression of my father's inclination. Before I became acquainted with you I wished to be able to accomplish it, slight as it was, as a kind of expiatory sacrifice to his manes, as a mode of prolonging, after death, the empire of his wishes over my own resolutions. But you have triumphed over this sentiment, you have triumphed over myself; and all that is wanting to me, is to obtain your forgiveness for whatever part of my conduct wears the aspect of weakness and irresolution. Corinna, from affliction such as mine has been, there never is a complete recovery. It withers the sinews of hope; it instils a sentiment of painful and feverish timidity. The wounds which destiny

has inflicted upon me have been so deep, that I distrust her even when she proffers me the greatest blessing. But, dearest friend, these inquietudes are dispelled, and I am yours, for ever yours! I assure myself, that had you been known to my father, it is you whom he would have selected as my companion for life; it is you—" "Stop," exclaimed Corinna, melting into tears, "stop, I conjure you, and do not thus address me.—

"Why would you repress," said Lord Nelvil, "the pleasure which I feel in associating you in my imagination with the memory of my father, and in thus blending together in my heart all that I hold dear and sacred." "You cannot, Oswald," interrupted Corinna, "I know that you cannot." "Just heaven!" resumed Lord Nelvil, "what have you to fear from me? Give me the manuscript which contains the history of your life—give it me." "You shall have it," replied Corinna,

"but let me have one week's indulgence —a single week. What has this morning come to my knowledge requires the introduction of some additional details." "How!" exclaimed Oswald, "what connection can your story have with—?" "Do not insist upon an answer at present," interrupted Corinna, "you shall soon know all, and that will, perhaps, be the termination, the dreadful termination of my happiness; but prior to that crisis, it is my wish, that we should together explore the happy plain of Naples with feelings yet unruffled, with a soul still accessible to the captivating charms which here deck the face of nature; I would in a manner consecrate in these delicious scenes the most solemn epoch of my life; it is requisite that you should preserve a farewel remembrance of me, such as I was, such as I should always have been, had my heart recoiled from the first approaches of your love." "Ah! Corinna," said Oswald, "what would you announce

to me by these inauspicious expressions? Surely you cannot have any thing to communicate to me which should chill the warmth of my attachment, and repress the ardour of my admiration. Why then prolong, for one week more, this anxiety, this mystery, which seems to erect a barrier between us?"—"Dear Oswald, such is my desire," replied Corinna, "forgive me this last act of power; soon you alone shall decide between us; I shall await my destiny from your own lips without murmuring, if it be severe; for I have not upon earth any attachments or connections whatsoever which can doom me to survive the loss of your love." With these words she left the parlour, gently pushing back Oswald with her hand as he attempted to follow her.

CHAPTER III.

CORINNA had resolved to give a splendid entertainment to Lord Nelvil during the eight days' delay she had requested; and this idea united with other causes inspired her with the most melancholy sensations. On reviewing the character of Oswald she felt herself much agitated, while anticipating the impression he would receive by what she had to impart to him. It was necessary to judge Corinna as a poet and an artist, to excuse in himself the sacrifice of rank, family, country, name, to the enthusiasm of talent and the fine arts. Lord Nelvil unquestionably possessed a mind capable of admiring wit and genius; but he at the same time firmly believed that the rela-

tions of social life were paramount to every other, and that it was the chief business of females, as well as men, to fulfil their duties to each other. The cruel remorse which he had experienced in deviating from his usual line of conduct, had moreover contributed to fortify those principles of morality which he had early imbibed.

The manners of England, as well as the habits and opinions of a country in which the most scrupulous attention is paid to the performance of moral duties, as well as to the laws, kept him in bondage; in short, the depression of mind produced by melancholy, causes us to respect that which is according to the nature or order of things, and acquires no new resolution, no decision contrary to the circumstances in which we are placed.

Love, though it may modify our feelings, does not change the character. This

Corinna observed in Lord Nelvil, notwithstanding the passion by which he was blinded, and perhaps even the secret charm of attaching Lord Nelvil depended much on this opposition between his nature and his sentiments, an opposition which gave an additional value to all the testimonies of his affection. But the moment approached when the transient distress which Corinna had experienced, and which had only hitherto contributed to allay the felicity which she enjoyed, was to decide her fate. That soul born for happiness, and accustomed to the pleasures of the imagination and poetry, felt itself weighed down by grief; a shuddering, which women long resigned to suffering never experience, agitated her whole frame, nevertheless, during this distressing anxiety, she yet contemplated the pleasure of passing one more brilliant day with Oswald. In her was united a romantic turn of mind to an extreme sensibility. She invited all the English who resided at

Naples, besides many Neapolitans of distinction, whose society gave her pleasure, to her fete on that day, on which she had determined to make a confession of what might for ever destroy her happiness. A cursory observer might readily have mistaken her wild and rapid motions, her wandering and vacant looks, as indicative of joy; but they proved too clearly to Lord Nelvil what passed in her mind. It was in vain he attempted to tranquillize her feelings by the most tender protestations. "We shall see whether two days hence," said she to him, "you are of the same opinion. At present these tender expressions rather tend to distress than to console me." Upon saying this she left him.

The company invited by Corinna arrived towards the close of day, at the moment when the sea breeze begins to blow, and by its mild an genial influence prepares the mind for the contemplation of

nature. Corinna and her friends first proceeded to the tomb of Virgil; at which they stopped before crossing the grotto of Pausilippo. No spot in the universe can surpass in beauty that on which stands the tomb of Virgil. From it we behold the Bay of Naples in the distance, and such is the combined effect proclaimed by the tranquil and magnificent scenery around, that we are induced to fancy, that this spot had been chosen by Virgil himself. This simple verse of his own might serve as an epitaph:

> Illo Virgilium me tempore dulcis alebat
> Parthenope.

The ashes of the Mantuan bard still repose there, and the remembrance of his name attracts the homage of mankind. This is all that man upon this earth can snatch from the hand of death.

Over this tomb was planted a laurel tree by the hands of Petrarch, but Petrarch is

no more, and the laurel is withered. The numerous strangers who flock to this place, to honour the memory of Virgil, inscribe their names upon the wall which surrounds the urn. The mind experiences a chagrin at beholding so many obscure names, which seem calculated for no other purpose than to interrupt the peaceful solitude of this abode. Petrarch alone was worthy of leaving behind him a durable memorial of his visit to Virgil's tomb. While descending in silence from this mournful asylum of the immortal poet, we recal to mind the thoughts and the images which he has transmitted to posterity. Admirable communication with future ages, a communication which the art of writing for ever perpetuates and renews! Ye shades of death, where then is your power! The ideas, the sentiments, the expressions of a man still exist, while that which was individual to him no longer exists! No, such a contradiction in nature is impossible.

"Oswald," said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, "the impressions you have just experienced but ill suit with a festival; yet how many," added she, with a sort of exultation in her look, "how many festivals have been held near the mansions of the dead!" "Dear friend," replied Oswald, "whence arises this secret grief which overpowers you? confide in me, I am already indebted to you for six of the happiest months of my life; perhaps during that period I may also have contributed to promote your felicity. Ah! who could be insensible to such good fortune? Who could ravish from me the supreme enjoyment of contributing to the happiness of such a mind as yours? Alas! it is a pleasing idea even to be necessary to the most humble of mortals; but to be necessary to Corinna, believe me it is too glorious, too delightful to be renounced." "I believe in your promise," replied Corinna; "but are there not moments when some violent and strange feelings take

possession of the heart, and accelerate its motion with a painful agitation ?"

They traversed the grotto of Pausilippo by torch-light, which is even necessary at mid-day, as the road is hewn out under the mountain for more than a quarter of a league, and when at the middle, the light is scarcely perceptible from the two extremities. An extraordinary echo resounds through this long vault; the steps of the horses, the voices of their conductors produces a stunning noise, which precludes any regular train of thought. The horses of Corinna proceeded with astonishing rapidity, yet she was not satisfied with their speed, and said to Lord Nelvil, " my dear Oswald, how slowly they proceed; urge them forward." " Whence comes this impatience, Corinna ?" replied Oswald; " formerly when we were together you wished not to hasten the flight of time, you enjoyed it." " At present" said Corinna, " it is necessary to decide to come

to a conclusion, and I perceive the necessity of hastening it, were it even to produce my death." They reached the extremity of the grotto, and experienced a lively sensation of pleasure in once more beholding the face of nature. This place is ornamented with trees which are not very common in Italy. The ground is besides covered with flowers, which here supply in some measure the want of those forests which are the greatest beauty of nature in every other country. The heat is so great at Naples, that it is impossible to walk even in the shade during the day; but in the evening this open country, surrounded by the sea and the sky, presents an extensive prospect, and we breathe a refreshing gale in every direction. The mildness of the air, the variety of the situations, the picturesque forms of the mountains, characterise so well the aspect of the kingdom of Naples, that painters, in designing landscapes, give it the preference. Nature displays in this country an energy

and features so peculiar, as not to be compared with any other.

"I wish you to proceed," said Corinna to those who accompanied her, "on the banks of the lake Avernus, near to Phlegethon, and behold before you the temple of the Sibyl of Cumea. We will traverse those celebrated places named the Baiæ; but I do not propose to stop there a single moment. We will collect the tracts of history and poetry with which we are every where surrounded, when we shall have reached a place from whence we can take an extensive view of these classic spots."

Corinna had prepared dances and music near the Cape Misena. Nothing could be more picturesque than the arrangement of this fete. All the sailors of Baiæ were clothed in lively and well contrasted colours; some oriental mariners, who had arrived in vessels from the Le-

vant, then in port, danced with the peasants from the neighbouring islands of Ischia and Procida, whose dress was still similar to the Greek costume; their harmonious voices were heard in the distance, and the sound of the instruments, re-echoed from the rocks, appeared to lose itself in the sea.

The air was delightful; it animated the soul with a feeling of happiness, which was experienced by all present, and even took possession of the mind of Corinna. On being solicited to intermix with the peasants in the dance, she at first consented with pleasure, but scarcely had she begun, than the intrusion of gloomy ideas rendered the amusement odious to her, and quickly withdrawing from the company, she went and seated herself on the extremity of the cape, near the sea shore. Oswald hastened to follow her, but before he had come up to her the company speedily rejoined him, in order to solicit

Corinna to favour them with an air on her lyre in this enchanting spot. Such was her distress at this moment, that she allowed them to conduct her to a rising ground on which they had placed her lyre, without reflecting on what was expected from her.

CHAPTER IV.

CORINNA however wished that Oswald should once more witness her performance. Though this talent were to be lost for ever, she yet wished that its last rays, before becoming extinct, might shine on him whom she loved. This wish made her find, even in the agitation of her mind, the inspiration of which she stood in need. Her lyre was prepared, and all her friends waited in anxious expectation to hear her. The people who were acquainted with her reputation, and who in the south are competent judges of music and poetry, surrounded in silence the inclosure where stood the friends of Corinna, and displayed in their countenances the most lively attention. The moon had

risen above the horizon but the last rays of day rendered still its light very feeble. From the top of the rising ground which stretches into the sea and forms Cape Misena might be seen, mount Vesuvius, the bay of Naples, the islands scattered over its surface, and the whole of the country which extends from that city to Gaeta, in short, the country of the universe in which volcanoes, history, and poetry have left behind the most durable traces. Thus, with one common consent, all the friends of Corinna requested her to favour them with the verses which she had before chaunted to *the remembrances which these places had excited in her mind.* She tuned her lyre and began with a faltering voice. Her looks were enchanting, but Oswald alone could divine the anxiety of her mind. She essayed, nevertheless, to conceal her distress, and to rise for a moment superior to her feelings.

The extemporaneous effusion of Corinna in the Campagna of Naples.

" Poetry, nature, and history, here emulate each other; here may be surveyed by a single glance of the eye all the wonders of former times.

" I behold the lake Avernus, an extinct volcano, the waters of which formerly excited so much terror; Acheron and Phlegethon, which a subterranean flame constantly keeps boiling, are the rivers of that infernal abode visited by Eneas. Fire, which produces and consumes the world, was formerly so much more terrific to the mind of man as its laws were less known. Nature formerly only revealed her secrets in poetry. The city of Cumea, the grotto of the Sibyl, and the temple of Apollo were situated on this eminence. Lo! there is the wood where the golden branch was gathered. The country of Eneas surrounds you, and the fictions consecrat-

ed by genius have become the remembrances of which we still seek the traces.

"A Triton precipitated into these waters the rash Trojan who dared to challenge the sea-gods by his songs. These hollow and sonorous rocks are such as Virgil described them. The imagination is ever faithful when it is omnipotent. The genius of man is creative when observant of nature, but only imitative when not copying it. Surrounded by these hideous masses of matter, coeval with creation, we behold a mountain lately ejected by a volcano. Here the land is equally stormy as the sea, and does not return like it peaceably into its limits. The sluggish element, heaved up by the earthquakes of the abyss, is hollowed out into vallies, elevated into mountains, and its petrified waters attest the tempest which lacerate its bosom. If you strike upon the ground, the subterraneous cavern re-echoes beneath your feet. It may even be said that the

inhabited world is nothing more than a surface ready to open and ingulf you. The Campagna of Naples is the image of human passions, sulphureous and fertile, its dangers and its pleasures seem composed of these burning volcanoes which give so many charms to the air, and cause the thunder to growl beneath our feet. Pliny studied nature the better to admire Italy; he boasted of its being the most beautiful of countries when he could no longer honour it with other titles. Seeking science as a warrior does conquests, he set out for this promontory, the better to observe Vesuvius through the flames, and these flames destroyed him.

"Oh! remembrance, noble power, thy empire is omnipotent! From age to age, capricious destiny! man mourns over what he has lost. It is said that the ages which have passed away are all depositaries in their turn of a happiness which is now no more; and whilst that thought swells in

its progress and darts into futurity, our soul seems to regret an ancient country whose past state resembles it. The Romans, whose splendour we envy, did they not regret the noble simplicity of their ancestors? Formerly they despised that voluptuous country, and its pleasures only served to subjugate their enemies. Regard Capua in the distance; it subdued the warrior, whose inflexible soul withstood Rome for a longer period than the universe.

"The Romans occupied these places in their turn. When the mind is wholly absorbed in shame and grief it becomes enervated, and is rendered callous to remorse. At Baiæ we have seen them building palaces upon the land gained from the sea; excavating mountains to obtain columns; and the masters of the world, slaves in turn, subjugated nature in order to console themselves for being enslaved. Cicero lost his life near the promontory of Gaeta, which presents itself

to our view. The triumvirate, without regard to posterity, despoiled it of the works which this great man had left behind him. The crime of the triumvirs is still felt, and will be so to the most remote posterity. Cicero fell beneath the poniard of tyrants. Scipio, still more unfortunate, was banished by his country while not yet enslaved. He ended his days not far from this shore, and the ruins of his tomb are called *the tower of the country;* affecting allusion to the thoughts with which his great mind was occupied! Marius sought refuge in the marshes of Minturnæ near Scipio's dwelling. Thus in all ages have illustrious characters been persecuted by their country; but they consoled themselves with the idea of deification, and the heavens, which the Romans believed subject to their power, received Romulus, Numa, Cæsar, and others, among its constellations—constellations which confound in our eyes the rays of glory and celestial light. But misfortunes are not enough,

here crimes of every kind are to be traced. Behold at the extremity of the gulf the isle of Caprea, where old age overtook Tiberius; where that soul, at once cruel and voluptuous, violent and worn out, became wearied even with the commission of crimes, and plunged into the most debasing pleasures, as if tyranny had not yet sufficiently debased him.

"The tomb of Agrippina is yet to be seen upon its borders, opposite the island of Caprea: it was only erected after the death of Nero, that inhuman matricide, who proscribed even her ashes. He resided a long time at Baiæ, surrounded with the remembrances of his crimes. What monsters does not chance collect under our eyes! Tiberius and Nero sufficiently prove it.

"The islands recently ejected from the sea by volcanic explosions were employed for the commission of the blackest crimes;

the unfortunate individuals who were banished to these solitary rocks in the midst of the sea, while viewing their country from afar, endeavoured to inhale its odoriferous perfumes, and not unfrequently, even after a tedious proscription, they learned by a decree of death that they had not been forgotten by their enemies. Oh! earth, bathed in blood and tears, thou hast never ceased to bring forth flowers and fruits! Dost thou then feel no compassion for man? and does his dust return into thy maternal bosom without making it recoil?"

Here Corinna reposed a few minutes. All those who were present cast at her feet branches of myrtle and laurel. The mild and pure light of the moon played over her features, the sea breeze agitated her hair, and it seemed as if nature delighted that she should appear to the utmost advantage. Corinna was, however, suddenly seized with an irresistible melancholy.

She felt all the beauties of that delightful evening, contemplated the enchanting scenes which surrounded her, and while she thought on Oswald, who was there, and who might not be there always, tears flowed from her eyes. Even the people who had crowded to bestow their noisy applause, respected her emotion, and waited in silence, until her words caused them to participate in the feelings she experienced. She swept a prelude on her lyre; and no longer dividing her song in octaves, she fell into an uninterrupted movement.

"Some recollections of the heart, some female names also claim your tears. It was at Misenus, near where we now are, that Cornelia, the widow of Pompey, wore, until her death, her honourable weeds. Agrippina on these shores long bewailed Germanicus; and the same assassin who bereaved her of her husband found her one day worthy to follow him.

The isle of Nisida beheld the last adieus of Brutus and Portia.

" Thus have women, beloved by heroes, seen the objects they adored perish. In vain did they long follow their traces: a day arrived in which they were at last to abandon them. Portia received from her own hand consolation in death. Cornelia pressed to her bosom the sacred urn, which was no longer responsive to her calls. Agrippina for several years vainly irritated the murderer of her husband. These unfortunate beings wandered like phantoms on the desolate brink of the stream of eternity, sighing to reach the opposite shore. In their long solitude they interrogate the silence which surrounded them; they demand from the star-bespangled sky, from the abyss of the ocean, in a word, from all nature, the sound of a dearly beloved voice, accents which they could never more hear.

"Love, supreme power of the heart, mysterious enthusiasm, in which poetic genius, heroism, and religion, are included! what happens when destiny separates us from him who possesses the secret of our souls, and has inspired our heart with feelings, with celestial life? What happens when absence or death leaves woman a solitary being on the face of the earth? She languishes, she falls. How often have the rocks which surround us given a cold support to those melancholy widows who formerly rested on the bosom of a friend, on the arm of an hero.

"Sorrento is before you; there dwelt the sister of Tasso, when he came disguised as a pilgrim, to ask an asylum against the injustice of princes. His lengthened sorrows had nearly subverted his reason. His genius, however, remained; but his knowledge was confined to things divine, all terrestrial images were confusedly represented to his mind. Thus

talent, dismayed by the desert with which it is surrounded, passes through the universe, and finds no associate. This divine emanation hears no responsive echo in nature, and the vulgar regard as a folly, that restlessness of soul which seems to want breathing room in this world, and which pants with enthusiasm and hope.

"A fatality," continued Corinna, with still increasing emotion—"Is there not a fatality suspended over exalted souls—over those poets whose imagination depends on the faculty of loving and suffering? They are the exiles of another religion, and universal benevolence could not arrange every thing for the happiness of the small number of chosen or rejected. What did the ancients mean when they spoke of destiny with so much terror? What influence could that destiny have over the unvarying existence of common and tranquil beings? They follow the changes of the seasons, they pass unruffled through the ordinary

course of life. But the priestess who delivered the oracles was agitated by an awful power. I know not what involuntary force precipitates genius into misfortune. Its possessor hears the music of the spheres which human organs cannot comprehend; he penetrates the mysteries of sentiment, which are unknown to other men, and in his soul resides a deity too great to be confined within mortal bounds!

"Sublime Creator of this magnificent nature, protect us! Our efforts are powerless, our hopes are deceitful. Passion exercises a tumultuous tyranny over us, which leaves us neither liberty nor repose. What we shall do to-morrow will perhaps determine our fate; perhaps we yesterday pronounced the word which nothing can redeem. When our mind is exalted to superior ideas, we seem as if we were placed on the summit of elevated edifices, and experience a vertigo which confounds every

object we view below. But even then grief, tormenting grief, is not lost amidst the clouds: on the contrary, it furrows and lays them open. O, my God! what does it unfold to us?"——

At these words a mortal paleness overcast the face of Corinna. Her eyes closed, and she would have fallen to the ground, had not Lord Nelvil, who was at that moment by her side, supported her.

CHAPTER V.

CORINNA recovered, and the sight of Oswald, who had in his countenance the most touching expression of interest and anxiety, rendered her somewhat tranquil. The Neapolitans remarked with astonishment the sombre tints of Corinna's poetic effusion. They admired the harmonious beauties of her versification, but they would have wished that it had flowed from a mind less tinctured with melancholy; for they consider the fine arts and poetry as the means of withdrawing their attention from the troubles of life, but never of penetrating further into these terrible secrets. The English, however, who had heard Corinna, regarded her with admiration.

They were delighted to hear the expression of melancholy sentiments combined in this manner with an Italian imagination. This beautiful Corinna, who by her animated traits, and looks full of life, seemed destined to draw the picture of happiness. This daughter of the sun, attacked by secret sorrows, resembled those flowers still fresh and brilliant, but in which there appears a black spot, produced by a mortal puncture, which threatens them with speedy destruction.

All the company embarked to return to Naples. The heat and the calm which then prevailed, rendered the sea extremely agreeable. Goëthe, in a charming romance, has finely painted our fondness for water in warm weather. The river nymph boasts to the fisherman the charms of her waters. She invites him to refresh himself in the stream, and gradually seduced by her solicitations, he at last plunges into the river. This magic pow-

er of the water somewhat resembles the look of the serpent, which attracts while it terrifies its victim: the wave which rises in the distance, and swells as it approaches the shore, may be compared to the secret desire of the heart, which commences silently and softly, but becomes at last irresistible.

Corinna became more calm. The delightful weather infused fresh vigour into her soul. She had turned up her tresses in order to enjoy more completely the contact of the air with her face, and this change rendered her more charming than ever. The wind instruments which followed in another boat produced an enchanting effect. They were in harmony with the undulations of the sea, with the mild light of the stars, and with the enchanting sweetness of an Italian evening. But they gave rise to emotions still more impressive. They seemed the voice of heaven amidst the silence of nature.

"My beloved," said Oswald, in a low voice: "dearest friend of my heart, I shall never forget this day. Can I ever experience one more happy?" In pronouncing these words his eyes were filled with tears. One of the most seductive charms of Oswald, was that prompt yet restrained feeling which frequently, in spite of himself, suffused his eyes. His look had then an irresistible expression: sometimes, even in the midst of a simple pleasantry, one perceived that he was touched by a secret tenderness which mingled with his gaiety, and gave him a noble charm. "Alas!" replied Corinna, "No, I never hope for such a day as this. Be it blessed, at least, as the last of my life, if it be not the aurora of future and durable happiness."

CHAPTER VI.

THE weather began to change when they arrived at Naples. The sky was obscured, and the storm which was threatened by the clouds, already agitated the water, as if the tempest of the ocean had been eager to reply from the bosom of its waves to the tempest of the heaven. Oswald had gone on a few paces before Corinna, because he wished to procure torches to conduct her home in safety. In passing along the quay, he saw some Lazzaroni assembled, who were crying out: *Ah! the poor man! he cannot save himself: he must perish.* "What do you say," exclaimed Lord Nelvil with impetuosity: "of whom do you speak?" *Of a poor old man who was bathing there, not*

far from the mall, but who is overtaken by the storm, and had not strength to struggle with the waves and regain the shore. The first thought of Oswald was to throw himself into the waves; but reflecting on the terror which he would occasion to Corinna, when she should come up to the spot, he offered all the money he had about him, and promised to double it, to any one who would jump in and save the old man. The Lazzaroni, however, refused, saying, *We are afraid: it is too dangerous: it cannot be done.* At this moment the old man disappeared. Oswald could not hesitate a moment longer. He rushed into the sea, while the waves closed over his head. He contended however, with success against them, and reaching the old man, to whom a moment's delay would have been fatal, brought him on shore. The cold of the weather, however, and his violent efforts had so exhausted Oswald, that the moment he brought the old man to land he fell

senseless to the ground, and such a paleness covered his countenance, that he was supposed to have expired.*

Corinna, who was then passing, was quite ignorant of what had happened. She saw a great crowd, and heard the cry *he is dead.* She was about to go away in consequence of the alarm which these words excited, when she observed one of the Englishmen who accompanied her rush hastily into the crowd. She followed him a few steps, and the first object she saw was the coat of Oswald, which he had thrown off when he punged into the water. She seized the coat with a convulsive despair, believing that nothing more remained of Oswald; and when she afterwards recognized him, she threw herself on his inanimate body with a sort of

* Mr. Elliot, the English Minister, saved the life of an old man at Naples, in the same manner as lord Nelvil did on the present occasion.

transport. Then pressing him with ardour in her arms, she had the inexpressible happiness of feeling the movement of his heart, which revived and beat on the touch of Corinna. "He lives," she exclaimed;—"he lives!"—and at this moment she displayed a courage which the friends of Oswald wanted—She called for assistance—and administered succour herself. She supported his head, and bedewed his face with her tears; and notwithstanding her agitation, omitted nothing that was necessary to be done. She lost not a moment. and her attention was never interrupted by her grief. Oswald appeared somewhat better, but he had not recovered the use of his senses. Corinna had him removed to her house, placed herself on her knees beside him, strewed perfumes over him, and called him with an accent so tender, so passionate, that life could not but return to answer that voice. Oswald heard her, opened his eyes, and clasped her hand in his.

Why was it necessary to enjoy such a moment of bliss, to have first experienced the agonies of death! Ah, poor human nature!—we know happiness only through the medium of pain; and in all the enjoyments of life there is nothing to compensate the despair of seeing a beloved object perish.

"Cruel!" said Corinna, "what have you done?" "Pardon me," said Oswald, with a trembling voice. "At the moment I thought I was about to perish, believe me, my love, my fears were all for you!" Admirable expression of participated affection, of love at the most happy moment of mutual confidence! Corinna was strongly moved by these words; and never until her last hour could she recollect them without a tender feeling, which for some moments, at least, expiated every error.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next reflection of Oswald made him put his hand to his breast to feel for his father's portrait. It was still there, but the water had so effaced it, that it was scarcely recognizable. Oswald was greatly afflicted at this loss. He exclaimed, "My God! am I then deprived even of his image?" Corinna prayed Lord Nelvil to allow her to restore the portrait. He consented, but had little hope in the success of her endeavours: but what was his astonishment when, after three days, she brought it to him, not only restored, but the likeness rendered more striking than it was before. "Yes," said Oswald transported, "you have divined his traits and his physiognomy. This must be a mira-

cle performed by heaven, who has destined you to be the companion of my life, since the knowledge of him who ought always to have disposed of me, has been revealed to you. Corinna," continued he, throwing himself at her feet, "reign for ever mistress of my life. Take this ring which my father gave to his wife, the most holy, the most sacred ring that ever was offered by the most noble candour, and accepted by the most faithful heart: I take it from my finger and place it on yours. From this moment, while you preserve that ring, I am no longer free. I make this solemn engagement before I know who you are. It is in your heart I place confidence: from it I have learned every thing. If the events of your life spring from yourself, they must be noble. If they proceed from a destiny of which you have been the victim, I thank heaven for granting me the duty of reparation. Instruct me then, O Corinna, in your secrets; you owe that account

to him whose promises have preceded your confidence."

"Oswald," replied Corinna, "this generous emotion of yours arises from an error, and I cannot accept your ring before I remove it. You think I have discovered the traits of your father by inspiration, but I have seen him often." "You have seen my father!" said Lord Nelvil; "How? and in what place? My God, who are you?" "There is your ring," said Corinna, with a stifled emotion; "I must return it to you." "No," replied Oswald, after a moment's silence, "I swear never to be the husband of another; but pardon the trouble that you have excited in my soul. I retrace confusedly some past ideas, and my uncertainty is painful." "I see it," replied Corinna, "and I am about to remove it, but your voice is already no longer the same, and your speech seems changed. Perhaps after having read my history—perhaps the horrible word

adieu !" ..... " Adieu !" exclaimed Lord Nelvil, " No : only on my death-bed can I pronounce that word. Fear it not until then :" Corinna, withdrew. In a few moments after Theresina entered Oswald's apartment, and delivered him a paper, which contained the following history.

BOOK XIV.

CHAP. I.

HISTORY OF CORINNA.

" OSWALD, I shall commence with a confession on which my life depends. If, after having read it, you cannot pardon me, do not proceed further in the perusal of this letter, but reject me. If, however, you know the name and the rank I have renounced, every thing is not broken off between us; what you will afterwards learn will perhaps serve to excuse me.

" Lord Edgermond was my father; I was born in Italy by his first wife, who was a Roman lady, and Lucilia, you were destined to espouse, is my sister by the father's side. She is the fruit of the

second marriage of my father with an English lady.

" Now listen to me. Educated in Italy, I lost my mother when I was only ten years old; but, as she had on her death-bed expressed a wish that my education might be finished before I went to England, my father left me with an aunt of my mother at Florence, where I remained until I was fifteen. My talents, my taste, even my character were formed, when the death of my aunt made my father determine on bringing me to his own country. He lived in a small town in Northumberland, which I am sensible could give me but a poor idea of England; but it was all that I had an opportunity of knowing of that country during the six years I lived in it. In my infancy my mother had frequently impressed upon my mind, that not to live in Italy was a misfortune; and my aunt often repeated that the fear of leaving her country had caused the

death of my mother. My good aunt was also persuaded that a catholic must be damned who lived in a protestant country, and though I was far from participating in this opinion, the idea of going to England gave me much uneasiness.

"I left Florence with an inexpressible feeling of regret. The woman who came for me did not understand Italian. I used to speak my native tongue, however, apart, in private with Theresina, who consented to follow me, though she wept at abandoning her country. But it was necessary to discontinue these harmonious sounds, which gave pleasure even to foreigners, and the charms of which were connected with all the recollections of my infant years. I proceeded towards the north, and the sensations which I experienced were sombre and melancholy. I had not seen my father for five years before I arrived in England, and I could scarcely recollect him. It appeared to me

that he had acquired an air of gravity which he did not formerly possess. He received me, however, with much tenderness, and often said to me that I resembled my mother. My little sister, then three years old, was introduced to me. Her white skin and fine flaxen hair surprised me, for we have no such figures in Italy; but she interested me from the moment I saw her. On that very day I took some of her hair to make a bracelet which I have carefully preserved. At last my mother-in-law appeared, and the impression she made on me at first sight has remained, and has increased ever since.

"Lady Edgermond was exclusively attached to the country in which she had been born, and my father, who was completely governed by her, gave up his desire to reside in London or Edinburgh. She was reserved, silent, and proud. There was sensibility in her eyes when she looked at her daughter; but at other

times her physiognomy was severe and inflexible; the creature of habit, it appeared impossible to make her comprehend a new idea, or even a word to which she was not accustomed. She received me very well, but I readily perceived that my manner greatly surprized her, and that she resolved to change it if she could. Not a word was spoken during dinner, notwithstanding that some neighbours were invited. This silence was so oppressive to me, that in the midst of the dinner I attempted to say a few words to an elderly gentleman who sat next me. I understood English very well, as my father had taught it me in my infancy, and, in the course of the conversation, I quoted some very elegant Italian verses, in which the subject of love was introduced. My mother-in-law, who knew Italian, looked at me, blushed, and made a signal for the ladies to retire much sooner than usual to the tea-table, the gentlemen being left alone at the desert. I did not under-

stand this custom, which would appear very extraordinary in Italy, where men can find no pleasure in society without women; but I supposed, for a moment, that my mother-in-law was so displeased at my conduct, that she would not stop in the room with me. I was undeceived, however, when she made a sign to me to follow her, and when I found that she did not reproach me during the three hours which we remained in the drawing-room, until the gentlemen joined us.

" My mother-in-law said to me, softly, at supper, that it was not the custom for young ladies to speak with so much freedom as I had shewn in conversation, and in particular that it was very wrong to say a word about love. " Miss Edgermond," said she, " you must endeavour to forget every thing connected with Italy, it would have been better for you had you never known that country." I passed the night in tears; my heart was oppressed

with sorrow. In the morning I went out to walk, and found myself enveloped in a frightful fog: I could not see the sun, which, at least, would have reminded me of Italy. My father came to me and said: "my dear child, it is not here as in Italy: with us women have no employ but their domestic duties: the talents which you possess will enable you to employ your time in solitude: perhaps you may meet with a husband to whom your accomplishments will afford pleasure; but in a small town like this, every thing that attracts attention excites envy, and you will find few men disposed to marry you, if it is believed that you have tastes and pursuits inconsistent with our manners. Here the whole routine of existence must be subject to our ancient provincial customs. I spent twelve years with your mother in Italy, and the recollection of that period still affords me exquisite pleasure. I was then young, and every novelty delighted me: now, however, I have contracted

myself within a narrow circle, and I am satisfied. Time passes away unperceived amidst a life which is regular and even monotonous: it is in vain to oppose the customs of the country in which one is fixed: those who make that attempt always suffer by their conduct; for in a little town like that in which we live, every thing is known, and every tale is repeated. There is no room for emulation, but much for jealousy; and it is far better to endure the tedium of such a life, than to be always meeting with surprize or ill-will in every face, and looks which seem to require of you a reason for what you have done."

"Dear Oswald, you can form no idea of the pain I experienced on hearing my father speak in this manner. I recollected him full of grace and vivacity, as I had seen him in my infancy, and I now found him bent under that leaden mantle described by Dante in his Inferno, and which

mediocrity always throws over the shoulders of those who submit themselves to her yoke. Every thing excellent seemed now to vanish from my view. The enthusiasm of nature, the fine arts, sentiment, all seemed to remove to an immeasurable distance. As I was naturally of a mild disposition, my mother-in-law had no reason to complain of me in my intercourse with herself, and my father had still less, for I loved him tenderly. In my conversations with him I still experienced some pleasure. He had resigned himself to his present situation, but he knew the advantage of another mode of existence; whereas most of our country gentlemen thought their constant routine of drinking, hunting, and sleeping, the best and most delightful life in the world.

"The contentment they seemed to enjoy astonished me not a little, and I often asked myself whether it was not I who had a wrong manner of thinking; and whe-

ther this enjoyment of rude but solid pleasures, whether this life, which seemed to escape equally from the extremes of mental delights, happiness, and pain, was not better than the sort of existence to which I had been destined; but what advantage could such a conviction have afforded me; I should only have regretted my faculties as a misfortune, while in Italy they would have passed for a favoured gift of Heaven.

"Among our visitors there were some who were not destitute of the rays of genius, but they stifled them as a dangerous flame. About forty it generally happened that the spirit which animated them became benumbed and dry, and they succeeded in reducing themselves to the level of their contemporaries. About the end of autumn my father frequently went on hunting parties, and sometimes did not return until midnight; during his absence I remained, the greater part of the day in my

room, and endeavoured to cultivate my talents, which displeased my mother-in law. "What is all this good for," she used to say, "will it render you more happy?" This question threw me into despair. What is happiness, said I to myself, if it is not the development of our faculties? Is not moral as bad as physical suicide? And if I must stifle my understanding, and repress all the emotions of my heart, why preserve the wretched remains of an existence which agitates me to no useful purpose? I took care, however, not to repeat these thoughts to my mother-in-law. I did once or twice break silence on this subject, but she replied to me that the business of a woman was to manage the affairs of her family, and to take care of the health of her children; that all pretensions to superior accomplishments only led to evil; and that the best advice she could give me, if I possessed them, was to conceal them. These observations, trifling as they were, left

me without a reply. For emulation, enthusiasm, and all those springs of the soul and of genius, require encouragement; and when checked, wither like flowers under a bleak and gloomy sky.

"There is nothing so easy as to assume a very moral air, while condemning every thing connected with elevation of mind. The sense of duty, and every feeling of noble ambition, may thus be perverted, and become a hostile weapon, which the ordinary class of men, or those who are content to exist in that state of mediocrity, employ to impose silence on talents, and to disembarrass themselves of that enthusiasm and genius with which they are in hostility. According to their language our duty consists in sacrificing the distinguished faculties which we possess; and that mental superiority is a wrong which those who possess it must expiate by leading precisely the same sort of life as that which those who are destitute of every

ray of genius pursue. But is it true that duty prescribes to all characters similar rules? Are not elevated ideas, and generous sentiments a debt which those who are capable of discharging it owe to the world? Ought not every woman, as well as every man, to trace for herself a path in life suited to her disposition and talents? Must we always be condemned to imitate the instinct of beavers, and allow generation to succeed generation without exhibiting any progressive improvement, or any diversity of character?

"No, Oswald, excuse the pride of Corinna. I believed myself formed for another destiny. I am sensible that I can sacrifice as much to love as those women seemed to yield by whom I was surrounded, and who did not allow themselves to possess either an idea of the mind, or a desire of the heart. Did it please you to spend your days in the extremity of Scotland, I should be happy to live and die be-

side you; but far from abdicating my imagination, it would in that situation enable me the better to enjoy nature; and the more extensive the empire of my mind became, the greater would be my happiness and pride in declaring you its master.

"My mother in-law was almost as much offended at my ideas as at my actions. It was not sufficient that I led a life similar to hers; she wished that the faculties which she did not possess should be considered as maladies. We lived near the sea, and the north wind frequently blew upon our castle. I used to listen to it during the night, as it whistled through the long Gothic galleries, and in the day time it was wonderfully favourable to the taciturnity of our family. The weather was damp and cold, and I could scarce ever go abroad without experiencing a painful sensation. There appeared something hostile in nature, which made me bitterly regret its mild and beneficial influence in Italy.

"In winter we lived in the neighbouring town, if a town it can be called, in which there were neither theatres, monuments of art, music, nor paintings. It was merely a scene of gossipping and lassitude.

"Births, marriages, and deaths were the only events of which the history of our society was composed. Imagine to yourself how an Italian, such as I was, would feel, seated at a tea-table for several hours after dinner in the compay of my mother-in-law. Our society consisted of seven of the gravest women of the county. Two of them were maidens of fifty, as timid as if they had been fifteen, but much less gay than at that age. One of them would say to the other: 'Do you think the water boils for tea.' 'I believe,' replied another, 'it will be too soon to make the tea, for the gentlemen are not yet ready to come.' 'Do you think they mean to stop long at table to-day?' said a third. 'I cannot tell,' replied a fourth;

'but as the general election is coming on, they will probably stop to talk about it.' 'No, no,' said a fifth, 'I dare say they are rather talking about the fox chace, which has engaged them so much for a week past. I dare say, however, they will soon be done.' 'Ah, they will never rise from table,' said a sixth, with a sigh, and then silence recommenced. I have been in Italian convents, but they appeared to me full of life compared to this circle. Every quarter of an hour some voice broke silence, to ask an insipid question, which received a cold answer, and all sunk again into a dullness, the weight of which would have been insupportable, had not habit accustomed these women to bear it from their infancy. At last the gentlemen came, but this event so impatiently expected did not produce any remarkable change of manner among the ladies. The men took the seats next the fire, and continued their own conversation: the women ranged themselves at the opposite end of the room,

and proceeded to distribute the tea. When the usual hour of departure arrived, they went home with their husbands, ready to recommence the same course of life on the following day, which differed in nothing from that which preceded it, except in its date in the calendar. In the mean time the traces of the years that elapsed became imprinted on the countenances of these women, as if they had lived during that period.

"I cannot now conceive how my genius was capable of escaping the mortal frigidity with which it was surrounded: for it must be confessed there are two means of viewing the question. The enthusiasm of genius may be praised, or it may be blamed. Motion and repose, variety and monotony, are susceptible of being attacked and defended by different arguments. One may plead on the side of life, but there is also a good deal to be said for death, or that which resembles it.

Thus it is not altogether true that one may treat with contempt what is said by the partisans of mediocrity. Their language has its influence in spite of you. It insinuates itself into the mind, and when your superiority occasions you trouble, these men are ready to persuade you that it is wrong to exercise your faculties. You hear them say, *Well, well,* in a tranquil and moderate tone, but which are, however, the most severe accents that can be pronounced. Envy cannot be supported, except in countries where that passion is excited by the admiration which talents inspire; but it is impossible to suppose any situation more painful than to exist where superiority creates jealousy, and never emulation. Such, however, was the condition in which I was placed in this contracted circle. The notice I attracted gave offence to almost every one, and I could not meet with those men who are to be found in London or Edinburgh, whose enlarged minds are capable of mak-

ing allowances for all circumstances, and who would have found some pleasure in the conversation of a foreigner, though she did not in all respects conform herself to the severe usages of the country.

"I sometimes passed whole days in the company of my mother-in-law, without hearing one word expressive either of talent or sentiment. Not a gesture was permitted in speaking. The countenances of the young ladies exhibited the finest red and white, the most delicate freshness, but at the same time the most perfect immobility; thus presenting a most remarkable contrast between nature and society. All ages had similar pleasures. Drinking tea and playing at whist were the principal relaxations of the female part of our company, who grew old in always doing the same thing, and remaining constantly at the same place. Time, when he came, was certain never to miss them; he always knew where to find them.

"In the smallest towns of Italy there are theatres, music, improvisatori, and, under a fine sky, great enthusiasm for poetry and the arts. Amidst these enjoyments we feel that we live; but there was in the place in which I existed a complete oblivion of every thing, and it seemed to me that I might have been represented by a puppet, constructed with no great mechanical skill. It would have acted my part in this society very well. As there are interests of various kinds in England, which are highly honourable to humanity, men have always the means of usefully occupying their minds in whatever state of retirement they may live. But the existence of women in the solitary region I inhabited was truly insipid. There were some who, in consequence of the efforts of nature and of reflection, had developed their minds, and from whom there had escaped some accents, some looks, some words secretly spoken, which deviated from the common path. But the narrow

opinion of this little district, all powerful within its own contracted circle, entirely stifled those germs of genius. A woman would have been regarded as extremely indiscreet, or of doubtful virtue, if she took liberties in conversation, or allowed any uncommon talents she might possess to appear; and what was still worse, if she could have surmounted these inconveniences she would have derived no advantage from her superiority.

"At first I endeavoured to animate this benumbed society: I proposed to them to read verses, to give concerts. But when any suggestion of this kind was made, one lady would recollect that she had been invited by her old aunt, and another that she had domestic arrangements to make which would occupy her time. All this was very reasonable, but it was remarkable that the sacrifice always fell on the pleasures of the mind and imagination. I so often heard the declaration, *that cannot be*

done, that among so many negations, not to live, would have seemed to me the best of all.

" After having struggled for some time in this way, I renounced my vain attempts; not that my father desired me to desist; on the contrary, he had engaged my mother-in-law not to trouble me further by opposing my inclinations: but the looks which were directed to me when I spoke, and a thousand little torments, similar to the cords with which the Lilliputians bound Gulliver, rendered every movement impracticable to me. I therefore at last began to act like those around me, but with this difference, that I was rendered miserable by lassitude, impatience, and disgust. I thus passed four tedious and painful years; but what most afflicted me was that I felt my talent declining, and my mind was, in spite of myself, occupied with trifles. In a society which is destitute of interest for the sci-

ences, in which no taste for literature, painting, and music exist, and where the imagination never is exercised, little tales and trifling observations must necessarily occupy the whole of the conversation. Minds which want both activity and the power of meditation, have something about them which is narrow and susceptible of restraint, and which renders the relations of society always insipid and painful.

" There is then no longer any enjoyment, except in a certain regularity, which is very convenient for those who wish to efface every kind of superiority, and to reduce all the world to their level. An acute feeling of the malevolence which I excited mingled itself, in spite of me, with the oppression caused by the vacuum which impeded my respiration. In vain do we assert such a man is unworthy to judge of me, such a woman is incapable of comprehending my character. The

human countenance exercises a powerful dominion over the human heart; and when we read in that countenance a secret disapprobation, it always disturbs our repose, even in defiance of our firmest resolves. The circle which surrounds us, sooner or later, conceals from us the rest of the world. The most diminutive object placed before the eye intercepts the sun. Thus it is with the petty society amidst which we live. Neither the regards of Europe nor posterity can make us insensible to the paltry vexations of a bad neighbour; and he who wishes to be happy, and to give full scope to his inclinations, should, above all things, make a right choice of the atmosphere by which he is to be more immediately encompassed.

CHAPTER II.

"THE education of my little sister constituted my sole amusement. My step-mother did not wish her to learn music, but had permitted me to teach her Italian and the art of drawing; and I am persuaded that she is still mistress of both: for I must do her the justice to say, that she then displayed a considerable share of intelligence. Oswald! Oswald! if it is for your happiness that I took so much pains, I shall still rejoice on that account; I shall experience a feeling of self-gratulation as I descend into the tomb.

"I was now nearly twenty years of age; my father wished to see me married; and here begins to open the volume of my destiny. My father was the bosom friend

of yours, and it was you, Oswald, you, whom he had fixed upon for my husband. Had you then known and loved me, the fate of both would have been without a cloud. I had heard your name mentioned in such strong terms of approbation, that, whether from a presentiment or from pride, I was extremely flattered in the hope of being wedded to you. You were rather young for me, as I am about eighteen months older than you; but your capacity, your taste for study, had, it was said, outrun your age, and I formed to myself so pleasing an image of the life I should lead with such a disposition as yours was described to be, that this hope wholly effaced my prepossessions against the modes of female existence in England. I was besides aware that you would take up your residence at Edinburgh or London, and in either of these cities I was sure to meet with the most distinguished society. I then conceived, as I still do, that all that was miserable in my condition was occa-

sioned by my residing in a little town, in a remote corner of a northern shire. Great towns alone are suited to persons who deviate from the common rules, when they are disposed to associate with mankind: there, as the modes of life teem with variety, novelty of character is contemplated with pleasure; but in places where all is regulated by a gentle system of monotony, there is a dislike to a temporary amusement, which serves only to discover the habitual languor of one's life.

"I find pleasure, Oswald, in repeating, that though I had never cast my eye upon you, I expected the arrival of your father, who had engaged to pass a week with mine, with real anxiety: a sensation for which there then was so little reason, that I cannot but regard it as the harbinger of my destiny. During Lord Nelvil's visit, I was anxious to please him; perhaps I was too much so, and took much more pains than was necessary to attain my pur-

pose. I gave him specimens of all my qualifications; I danced, sung, and composed extemporary verses; and my mind, so long under restraint, was perhaps too full of vivacity, on breaking its chains. Seven years of experience have calmed my spirits; I have less eagerness to attract the notice of the world; I am better accustomed to myself; I am endowed with a greater share of patience; I have perhaps less confidence in the good disposition of others, but am, at the same time, less solicitous to gain their applause: in short, it is not improbable that there might then appear something strange about me. There is so much fire, and so much imprudence in early youth! We anticipate life with so much vivacity! The most cultivated and enlarged understanding does not supply the want of years; and though thus liberally gifted, we may talk of mankind as if we knew them, yet our actions are not influenced by our own conceptions: there is an indescribable fever-

ishness in our ideas, which prevents us from conforming our conduct to the deductions of our reason.

"I am disposed to think, but without being positively certain, that I appeared to Lord Nelvil to have too large a share of animal spirits; for after passing a week at my father's, during which, indeed, he expressed an extreme partiality for me, he left us, and wrote to my father, that, all circumstances being taken into consideration, he thought his son too young yet to conclude the match which they had in view. Oswald, what importance do you attach to this declaration? This circumstance of my life I might have concealed from you. I have not done so. Was it possible, however, that it should, in your opinion, seal my condemnation! I am conscious that I have improved within the last seven years; and would your father have witnessed, without emotion, my tender, my enthusiastic attachment to you!

Oswald, he loved you: he would have heard our prayer.

"My step-mother formed the project of marrying me to the son of her elder brother, who had an estate in our neighbourhood. He was about thirty years old, wealthy, of a handsome figure, of distinguished birth, and of a very good kind of disposition; but so thoroughly persuaded of the authority of the husband, and the submissive and domestic destination of the wife, that the slightest doubt respecting this doctrine would have shocked him as much, as to call in question a maxim of honour or probity. Mr. Maclinson, such was his name, was not displeased with my person, and what he had heard in the town of my understanding and singular disposition, gave him not the slightest uneasiness. There was so much of order in his establishment, every thing was conducted so regularly, at the same hour, and in the same manner, that it was impossible it should

undergo any change. The two old aunts who superintended his household affairs, the domestics, nay, the very horses, could do nothing one day but what they had done the day before; and even the articles of furniture appropriated to this sort of life, would, I verily believe, have started from their places at the introduction of the smallest innovation. Mr. Maclinson was, therefore, justified in apprehending no inconvenience from my arrival in such a mansion, where the force of habit was so prevalent, that the little freedom I might indulge in would amuse him for a quarter of an hour in the week, but could assuredly have no other consequence.

"He was a good sort of man, and incapable of intentionally giving pain to any one. But were I, at any time, to complain of the numberless vexations which may torture an active and susceptible mind, he would merely have advised me to get on horseback, and take an airing.

He was desirous of espousing me, precisely because he had no idea of the wants of the mind and the imagination; and because he was pleased with me, though he knew nothing of my character. Had he but entertained the slightest conception of what a distinguished female is, and the advantages and disadvantages which may attach to her, he would have dreaded the thought of not being sufficiently attractive in my estimation; but this sort of uneasiness never once entered his imagination. You may guess my repugnance to such a match. I met the proposition with a decided refusal, which my father supported, but which furnished my step-mother with an occasion of the warmest resentment. She was essentially despotic in her temper, though her timidity often prevented her from expressing her desires. If you did not anticipate her wishes, she was out of humour; but if, after she had made an effort to express them, they met with resistance, she was so much the less in-

clined to pardon it, in proportion to the difficulty which she felt in throwing off her accustomed reserve.

"The whole town censured me in the severest terms. So suitable a match, a fortune so unincumbered, a man so much respected, and a family of such distinction! Such was the general outcry. In vain did I endeavour to explain why that match, which they thought so suitable, did not suit me at all. Sometimes I succeeded in making myself understood, but the instant I was gone no trace remained of what I had spoken; for their usual train of ideas instantly re-entered the heads of my auditors, and they welcomed, with fresh pleasure, the return of those old friends whom I had for a moment banished.

"A lady of a much livelier disposition than the rest of my female acquaintance, though externally she conformed in every

thing to the ordinary routine of life, took me aside one day, after I had expressed my sentiments with more than my usual vivacity, and addressed me in these terms, which made a deep impression on my mind:—'You give yourself, my dear, a great deal of trouble to produce an impossibility. You cannot change the nature of things; a little town in the north, unconnected with the rest of the world, and without any taste for literature or the fine arts, must remain such as it is; if you intend to continue here, you must submit to the general opinion: go away, if you can; this is your only alternative.' This reasoning seemed but too well founded. I felt for this woman a degree of consideration which I did not entertain for myself; for with inclinations analogous to my own, she had resigned herself to that destiny which I could not support: and with a vivid perception of ideal and poetical enjoyments, she formed a more correct estimate of the force of circumstances, and the

obstinacy of man. I used every effort to form an intimacy with her; but all to no purpose. Though her mind soared above the common sphere, her life was confined within it; and I am even inclined to think she was afraid that our frequent conversations might re-awake her natural superiority; and of what benefit would that have been to her?

CHAPTER III.

"IN this deplorable condition of existence, I might nevertheless have passed the remainder of my life, had I preserved my father. But a sudden accident took him from me; and with him, I lost my protection, my friend, the only being who still listened to me amidst that peopled desert; and such was the violence of my sorrow, that I had no longer strength to resist the impressions of my imagination. At the time of his death, I was twenty years of age, and found myself without any other support, any other relative than my step-mother; a person to whom, notwithstanding a residence of five years under the same roof, I was no more attached than the first day of our

acquaintance. She again began to talk to me of Mr. Maclinson, and though she had no authority to command me to espouse him, she admitted no other visitor, and told me without reserve, that she would countenance no other suitor. Not that she had any strong partiality for Mr. Maclinson though her near relative; but she regarded my refusal as a mark of contumacy, and made a common cause with him, rather to defend her own mediocrity, than to promote the interests of her family.

" My situation became daily more disgusting. I was seized with the *maladie du pays,* the most painful disease which can afflict the mind. To men of warm and lively feelings exile is sometimes a much more cruel punishment than death. The imagination takes a disgust at every object which surrounds you;—the climate, the country, the language, the usages, in short the whole system of life,

in the gross, and all its details; then every moment and every situation has its peculiar pain; for our native soil gives us a thousand habitual pleasures of which we become conscious only by their loss :—

——————la favella, i costumi,
L'aria, i tronchi, il terren, le mura, i sassi*.

"Absence from the spot whereon we passed the period of infancy, is then found to be no light affliction. The recollections of that age, by a peculiar charm, rejuvenate the heart, and yet, at the same time, soothe the approach of death. The tomb approximated to the cradle, seems to place the whole of life under the same shade; whilst the years passed on a foreign soil looks like rootless branches. There, the generation which precedes you did not witness your birth; it is not the generation of your parents, your pro-

* The language, the manners, the air, the trees, the soil, the walls, the stones!—*Metastasio.*

tectors; a thousand interests which you have in common with your countrymen are unintelligible to strangers; to them every thing must be explained and commented on, instead of that easy communication, that effusion of ideas which takes place the instant you meet with a fellow-countryman. I could not without emotion, recollect the kind-hearted expressions of my country. *Cara Carissima,* I sometimes repeated in my solitary walks, imitating to myself the amicable salutation of the Italians, and comparing it with that I now received.

"I daily strayed through the fields, and where, in Italy, I had been accustomed, every evening, to hear the most melodious airs sung with so much correctness and taste, I now heard nothing but the croaking of the ravens. The brilliant sun, the sweetly serene sky of my native country was replaced by impenetrable fogs; the fruits scarcely ever ripened; there were

no vines to be seen; the flowers reared their languid forms at distant intervals; the firs covered the mountains, throughout the year, with their dark and dismal veil: an antique edifice, a beautiful painting would have revived my soul, but in vain should I have sought for either within the compass of thirty miles. All was blighted, all was sad around me, and what there was of habitations and inhabitants served only to deprive solitude of that poetic horror, which sometimes affects the mind with a not unpleasing agitation. The environs exhibited marks of plenty, and of a certain extent of commerce and cultivation, in a word, all that might induce the remark: "*you ought to be content; you have every thing that can be wished for.*" A stupid decision, founded upon external appearance, whereas the sole source of happiness or misery consists in the inmost sanctuary of our own feelings!

"At the age of twenty-one, I entered, as a matter of course, into possession of my mother's fortune, with the addition made to it by my father's will. Upon one occasion, in my solitary reveries, the thought struck me, that, being an orphan and having attained the years of majority, I might now return to Italy, and there lead a life of independence, entirely devoted to the arts. This project, at the instant it occurred to me, intoxicated me with joy, and, at first, I could not imagine the possibility of any objection to it. When the fever of hope, however, was somewhat abated, I began to recoil from that irreparable determination; and figuring to myself what my acquaintance would think of it, the project which at first seemed so easy, now appeared to be impracticable; nevertheless the image of a life passed amidst all the memorials of antiquity, and the impressions of painting and music, presented itself to my mind with so many details and attrac-

tions, that I conceived a fresh disgust at my dull and tedious course of existence.

" My talent for composition, which I was apprehensive I should lose, was improved by the close application I had given to the study of English literature. The profound style of thought and feeling which characterises your poets, invigorated my understanding, and expanded my heart, without in the least impairing that activity of imagination which seems the exclusive patrimony of the inhabitants of southern climates. I might, therefore, think myself possessed of peculiar advantages, from the rare combination of circumstances by which I had received a double education, and if I may so express myself, two distinct *nationalities* of thought and expression. I recollected the approbation which a small number of competent judges at Florence, had bestowed on my first essays in poetry. I warmed my imagination with the idea

of the fresh successes which I should obtain; in a word, I had the highest expectations of myself; and is not this the first and the noblest illusion of youth?

"It seemed to me as if I should become mistress of the universe, the day I found myself beyond the reach of the withering breath of malevolent mediocrity; but when it became necessary to take the resolution of setting off, of eloping secretly, I felt myself arrested by a respect to public opinion, to which I attached a much greater value in England than in Italy; for though I disliked the little town where I resided, I respected the country of which it formed a part. Had my step-mother designed to carry me to London or Edinburgh, had she thought of uniting me to a man possessing sufficient understanding to place a proper value on mine, I should never have renounced my name, nor my course of life, not even for the purpose of revisiting my prior country: in fact, how-

ever harsh the empire which my step-mother exercised over me, I should, perhaps, have never thought of changing my situation, but for a multiplicity of circumstances which, in a manner, concurred to fix my fluctuating resolves.

"I had with me the Italian maid servant, you are acquainted with, Theresina, who is a native of Tuscany, and who, though her mind has never been cultivated, makes use of those noble and harmonious expressions, which confer a grace upon the most unimportant phrase in the mouths of our people. She was the only person with whom I conversed in my native language, and this consideration formed a bond of attachment between us. I frequently observed her in a pensive mood, but dared not enquire after the cause, suspecting that, like myself, she regretted her absence from our country, and fearing I should lose all restraint on my own feelings, if they were once excited by the

sympathy of others. There are some afflictions which are mitigated by communicating them to others; but the maladies of the imagination are always exacerbated by revealing them, and particularly if the person to whom they are confided, labours under a similar disease. In this case the evil seems incurable, and we no longer attempt to resist it. My poor Theresina of a sudden fell seriously ill, and hearing her sigh, night and day, incessantly, I at last resolved upon enquiring into the cause of her disquietude. What was my astonishment, when I heard her repeat almost all that I had myself felt! She had not so completely meditated, as I had, upon the cause of all her complaint. Her mind was more occupied with local circumstances, and personal attachments; but the gloomy aspect of nature, the insipidity of the town where we resided, the reserve of the inhabitants, the stiffness of their manners—she felt all in their effects, though unable to account for them,

and continued to exclaim incessantly, "O my country! shall I never again behold thee!"—Adding, however, that she would not quit me, and, with a degree of bitterness which touched me to the heart, bewailing her inability to conciliate with her attachment for me, the fine climate of Italy, and the pleasure of hearing her native language spoken.

"Nothing could more forcibly affect my mind, than this reflexion of my own impressions in a person of the lowest rank, who had however preserved the Italian dispositions and habits in their natural vivacity, and I gave her a promise that she should revisit Italy. "With you?" replied she. I was silent. Upon this she tore her hair, and took a solemn oath that she would never part from me; and as she pronounced the words, she seemed ready to sink into her grave. At length I happened to say, that I would also return thither: and this promise, made only

to tranquillize her, acquired greater solemnity from the inexpressible joy with which it inspired her, and the confidence she reposed in it. From that day forward, without any consultation with me, she got acquainted with some of the mercantile inhabitants of the place, and was sure not to let slip an opportunity of telling me the exact day on which any vessel was setting off from the adjacent port, for Leghorn or Genoa. I used, upon those occasions, to hear her without giving any answer. She, on her part, imitated my silence, but her eyes were filled with tears. My health became daily more impaired from the effects of the climate and my internal agitation. Motion and gaiety, as I have often remarked to you, are with me indispensable; grief would destroy me; I struggled too much against it; it must be yielded to, in order to prevent its fatality.

"The project, therefore, which engrossed

my attention since the death of my father, frequently recurred to my mind: but I was strongly attached to Lucilia, then about nine years old, and whom, from her sixth year, I had cherished as her second mother. Upon one occasion, it seemed to me, that by a secret elopement, I should injure my reputation to a degree which might implicate my sister's name; and this apprehension caused me, for a time, to forego my projects. One evening, nevertheless, when I was more than ever chagrined with my condition in respect to my step-mother, and society in general, I happened to sup alone with Lady Edgermond. After one hour of profound silence, I suddenly became so disgusted with her unalterable reserve, that I began the conversation with lamenting the mode in which I passed my life, my purpose being, in the first instance, rather to compel her to speak, than to bring her to any resolution

which could interest me; but warming as I proceeded, I all at once started the possibility of one, situated as I was, bidding an eternal adieu to England. My step-mother was not in the slightest degree disconcerted by this insinuation; but with a coldness and dryness which I can never forget, she remarked: "You are twenty-one years old, Miss Edgermond; your mother's fortune, and the provision left you by your father, are consequently at your own disposal. You are your own mistress, and may do as you please; but if you take any resolution which may injure you in the public opinion, you owe it to your family, to change your name, and circulate a report of your death." After these words, I impetuously started from my seat, and rushed out of the room, without deigning to give a reply.

"This disdainful specimen of hard-heartedness, called forth my warmest in-

dignation, and, for an instant, I was transported with a desire of revenge which was foreign to my real disposition. These emotions were, however, tranquillized; but the conviction that no one was interested in my happiness, completely burst asunder those ties that had hitherto bound me to the house, which had been the residence of my father. Most certainly, I had no partiality for Lady Edgermond, but I had not that indifference for her which she shewed with regard to me. I was pleased with her tender affection for her daughter; I conceived that my attentions to the child had gained me some interest in her heart; whereas these very attentions, perhaps, excited her jealousy: for the greater the sacrifices which she made in all other respects, the more vehement was she in the only affection in which she indulged. All that there is of warmth and animation incident to the human heart, though completely subdued to her reason on all other occasions, in-

stantly regained the ascendant in her disposition, when her daughter was in question.

"Amidst these feelings of resentment, excited in my bosom by my discourse with Lady Edgermond, Theresina came to inform me, with extreme emotion, that a vessel, direct from Leghorn, had arrived at the port, from which we were only a few miles distant; and that there were some mercantile persons on board with whom she was acquainted, and who were men of the highest respectability. "They are all Italians," said, she, as she let fall a tear, "they speak only Italian; they put to sea again in a week and sail direct for Italy, and if Madam had made up her mind to"—— "Do you take a passage home with them, Theresina," replied I. "No, my dear lady," exclaimed she, "I prefer dying here," and immediately left my chamber, where I remained meditating upon what line of conduct I should take

with regard to my step-mother. It seemed incontrovertible, that she no longer wished me to stay with her. My influence over Lucilia was disagreeable to her. She was in dread, lest the character which I had of being a strange sort of woman might one day prove injurious to her daughter's establishment in life: in a word, she had permitted the secret of her heart to escape, by expressing her wish that I should give myself out as dead. Yet this unfeeling counsel which, in the first instance, so much shocked me, seemed, on further reflexion, to be reasonable enough.

"Yes, most assuredly," exclaimed I, "let me pass for dead in a place where life is to me but an agitated sleep. With nature, the sun, and the fine arts, I shall come to life again, whilst the uninteresting characters which compose my name, inscribed on an empty tomb, will equally

well supply my place in this inanimate abode." These flights of my soul after freedom, did not, however, after all, give me strength enough to form a decisive resolution. There are moments when we think we have power to accomplish our desires, and others, wherein the habitual routine of events prevails over all the sentiments of the heart. I continued in this state of fluctuation, and might, perhaps, have done so for ever, since there was nothing of an extrinsic impulse to make me come to a final decision; when, on the Sunday following my conversation with my step-mother, I heard, towards the evening, under my windows, the voice of some Italian singers, who had arrived in the vessel from Leghorn, and whom Theresina had brought there, for the purpose of giving me an agreeable surprise. The emotion which I felt beggars all description. A deluge of tears overflowed my visage, and all my recollections were

roused into life. Nothing equals the power of music in retracing the past; it does more than retrace; at its evocation the past appears like the shades of those whom we hold dear, clothed with a mysterious and melancholy veil. The musicians were singing these delicious expressions of Monti, which were composed during his exile:—

Bella Italia, amate sponde,
Pur vi torno à riveder.
Trema in petto e si confonde
L'alma oppressa dal piacer.*

"I was in a state of mental intoxication; I experienced, with respect to Italy, all the sensations excited by love, desire, enthusiasm, and regret. I was no longer mistress of my feelings; my whole soul was fixed upon my native country. I

* Delightful Italy, beloved shores, I shall then behold you once more! My soul trembles and sinks under an ecstacy of pleasure.

was impatient to see, to breathe, to hear it; every pulsation of my heart was a call towards my delicious home, the happy soil of my nativity! Were the tenants of the grave recalled to life, not greater impatience could they feel to raise up the tomb-stones which cover them, than I felt to shake off all my winding-sheets, to resume possession of my original imagination and character, and to re-contemplate that face of nature with which I was familiar in infancy! During the transport of joy excited by the music, I was still far from taking a decided resolution, for my sentiments were too confused to admit of my drawing from them any positive conclusion; when my step-mother entered, and begged I would make the singers give over, because it was scandalous to have music on a Sunday. I begged they might be permitted to go on, alleging that the Italians were to set off next day, and that I had not, for six years, enjoyed the same pleasure. My step-mother would

not listen to me, and telling me that it was indispensably necessary to respect the usages of the country one lived in, approached the window, and ordered some of her servants to remove my countrymen. They went away, and until their strains died upon the ear from distance, repeated an adieu as they went, which penetrated to my heart.

" The measure of my impressions was now complete; the vessel was to set sail on the following day; and Theresina had, at all risks, and without apprising me, made every preparation for my departure. Lucilia had been, for a week before, on a visit to a relation of her mother's. My father's ashes did not repose near the country seat which we occupied; he had given orders, that they should be deposited in the family vault in Scotland. In short, I departed without consulting my step-mother, and left behind me a letter acquainting her with my determina-

tion. I set off in one of those moments when we abandon ourselves to fate; when every thing appears preferable to servitude, disgust, and insipidity; when inconsiderate youth boldly trusts itself to futurity, and contemplates it in the heavens, like a brilliant star beaming forth the assurance of a happy destiny.

CHAPTER IV.

"REFLECTIONS of a less tranquil description rushed upon my mind, when I lost sight of the shores of England. But as I had left behind no ardent attachment, I was speedily consoled, on my arrival at Leghorn, by all the charms of Italy. My real name, according to my promise to my step-mother, I kept a profound secret, taking that of Corinna, to which the history of a Grecian female, the friend of Pindar and a poetess, had given me a partiality.* My figure, as I grew up, had undergone so complete a change, that I was certain no one could recognize me. I had led a pretty solitary life at Florence, and I might calculate on

* The name of Corinna is not to be confounded with that of Corilla, an Italian *improvisatrice*, of great celebrity. Corinna was a Greek female, well known by her lyric poems: Pindar himself received lessons from her.

what has occurred, that at Rome nobody knew who I was. My step-mother wrote to acquaint me, that she had circulated a report of my physicians having prescribed a tour to the south of Europe for the recovery of my health, and that I had died on the journey. Her letter went no further than to communicate this information: she took care to remit the whole of my fortune, which amounted to a considerable sum, with the utmost punctuality; but has never since honoured me with a single letter. Five years intervened between this period and the time when I first saw you; five years, during which I enjoyed a considerable share of happiness. I had taken up my residence at Rome; my reputation had increased; the fine arts, and the pursuits of literature even gave me greater pleasure, as a source of solitary amusement, than as the means of obtaining public celebrity, and until I became acquainted with you, I never knew the full extent of the empire of sentiment. My imagination occasionally co-

loured or discoloured my illusions, without giving me any deep or lasting uneasiness; I was not yet seized with any affection which I could not easily overcome. Admiration, respect, love, had not as yet engrossed all the faculties of my soul; even in my attachments, a slight degree of examination dispelled the attractions which they first presented to my view. In short, I retained a complete command of my impressions, instead of being wholly subjugated by them.

"Ask me not to recount how two men, whose passion for me has but made too much noise, successively occupied a portion of my time, before I became acquainted with you. I must do violence to my heart-felt conviction to persuade myself, at this period, that any other than you was capable of exciting an interest in my bosom: and I never think of these events but with equal repentance and regret. I will merely tell you, what you have al-

ready learnt from my friends, that my independent mode of life was so agreeable to me, that after long intervals of irresolution, and many painful occurrences, I twice broke off engagements which a momentary impulse of affection had made me contract, but which I could not bring myself to render irrevocable. A distinguished German nobleman proposed, on receiving the favour of my hand, to carry me to his native country, where his rank and fortune led him to fix his residence; and an Italian prince offered me, in Rome itself, the most splendid establishment. The former gained my good-will by inspiring me with the highest esteem for him; but in process of time I discovered, that he was not possessed of any great extent of understanding or information. When we were by ourselves, I had to perform the difficult task of supporting the conversation, and, at the same time, carefully avoiding such topics as might discover his defects. In talking with him

I could not venture to display my own powers for fear of embarrassing him. I foresaw that his regard for me would of necessity diminish the instant I should cease to humour him; and it is difficult to keep alive the enthusiasm of love where continual circumspection is required.

"The affection of a woman for a man who is in any respect her inferior, always implies that she is allied to him more by the ties of compassion than love; and the sort of calculation and reflexion which such an attachment requires, blights the heaven-born blossom of involuntary sentiment. The Italian prince, to all the graces of a sprightly imagination united a well-cultivated understanding. He proposed to fix our residence at Rome; he participated in all my predilections, and was delighted with my mode of life; but, on an important occasion, I remarked that he was destitute of energy of soul, and that, in any of the difficult emergencies of

life, it was upon me the task would devolve of sustaining and fortifying his nerves. By this discovery love was instantly put to flight; for it is the female who requires support, and nothing chills the ardour of her affection so much as the necessity of giving it. Thus was I twice undeceived in my attachments, not from any fault or misfortune, but from my observing mind discovering what my imagination had concealed from me.

"I thought myself destined never to feel what it was to "love with all my soul." Sometimes this idea affected me with painful regret; but more frequently I congratulated myself on being free. I dreaded the effect of my susceptibility of impression, and that impassioned temperament which menaced my happiness and my existence: but always consoled myself with the reflexion, that it was difficult to lead my judgment captive, and I did not conceive that I should ever meet

with one who would altogether correspond with the idea which I had formed of the mental and personal qualities of the man whom I should select for a husband. I always expected that I should escape from the absolute power of an attachment, by perceiving some defects in the object of my regard. I was not aware that there were certain defects which tended rather to heighten affection, by mingling with it a degree of anxiety. Oswald, that melancholy, that uncertainty, which makes you distrust every thing, the severity of your habits of thinking, disturbs my repose, without impairing the warmth of my love. I often think that this warmth of feeling will not contribute to my happiness; but, on those occasions, it is not you, but myself, on whom I pass sentence.

"You are now in full possession of the history of my life; my elopement from England; my change of name; the in-

constancy of my heart. I have concealed nothing from you. You will, doubtless, be of opinion that my imagination has often led me astray; but if society did not fetter the conduct of the female sex with ties of every description, from which men are left disengaged, what has there been in my life which could prevent me from being an object of regard? Have I ever practised deception? Have I ever inflicted an injury? Has the purity of my soul been ever tarnished by interests of a vulgar description? Sincerity, benevolence, dignified pride! Can the Deity require any more of an orphan, left a solitary being in the midst of the universe? Happy the female, who, at the first step she takes in the path of life, meets with the man who is worthy of her perpetual love! But do I the less merit such a man for having known him when too late?

"Yet, my lord, I will make bold to tell you, and you will do justice to my

frankness, that if I could pass my life with you, without espousing you, I am inclined to think, that, notwithstanding the loss of great happiness, and a triumph, in my opinion the highest to which I could aspire, I would not consent to our union. Our marriage would, perhaps, be a sacrifice on your part; perhaps you will one day sigh for my sister, the beautiful Lucilia, whom your father selected for you. She is younger than me by twelve years. Her name is spotless as the first flowret of spring; mine must be revived in England, where it has long been consigned to the tomb. Lucilia is of a mild and unaffected disposition; and if I may form an opinion from her infancy, she may be capable of appreciating your character, and returning your affection. Oswald, you are free; whenever you desire it, your ring shall be returned to you.

"You are, perhaps, desirous of knowing, before you come to a decision, what

the effect may be on my feelings, should you resolve to abandon me. Of that I am ignorant. There occasionally spring up in my soul tumultuous movements which overpower my reason, and I should not be culpable should similar agitations render my existence totally insupportable. It is, on the other hand, equally true, that I have a great susceptibility of happiness. I sometimes experience, as it were, a fever of ideas, which accelerates the circulation of my blood. I take an interest in every thing around me; I deliver my own sentiments with pleasure; I listen with rapture to the enlightened conversation of others; I am delighted with the proofs of regard which they shew me; I enjoy the wonders of nature, and those productions of art which do not bear the marks of the chilling hand of affectation. But would it be in my power to live, when I should no longer behold you? Of that, Oswald, I leave you to judge, for you know me better than I do myself. I am not res-

ponsible for what I may feel; it is for him, who plunges in the poniard, to say whether the wound he gives be mortal. But should it be so, Oswald, you have a claim to my forgiveness.

"My happiness totally depends on the attachment which you have shewn me for the last six months. I could defy all the power of your resolution and your delicacy to deceive me with respect to the slightest alteration in that attachment. Banish from your mind, on this subject, every idea of duty; love recognizes neither promise nor guarantee. The Deity alone can give life again to the withered flower. A word, a look from you, will suffice to tell me your heart is no longer the same; and I should detest all that you could offer me in lieu of your love, that divine ray, my celestial *glory!* Be, therefore, free from this instant, Oswald, free every day of your life, free even should you espouse me; for if you should

cease at any time to love me, I would release you, by my death, from those indissoluble ties which would bind you to me.

"The instant you have read this letter, I shall wish to see you once more. My impatience will conduct me to you, and I shall learn my fate in your looks; for misfortune is rapid in its communications, and the heart, feeble as it is, cannot be mistaken as to the baleful signs of an irrevocable destiny."

T. Gillet, Printer, Wild-Court.

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